

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 255 Session of  
1990

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HERSHEY AND JOHNSON, FEBRUARY 12, 1990

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES, FEBRUARY 12, 1990

## A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing the Congress of the United States to take whatever  
2 steps are necessary to insure that energy supplies,  
3 particularly heating oil and propane, are made available at a  
4 reasonable price to consumers in the Commonwealth of  
5 Pennsylvania and throughout the nation, especially during  
6 times of severe weather conditions and supply disruptions.

7 WHEREAS, Heating oil prices increased as much as 50¢ a gallon  
8 in Pennsylvania during the month of December while the spot  
9 price for a barrel of crude oil increased only 3¢ per gallon;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, Heating oil supplies were at their lowest level in  
12 15 years at the start of the heating season, even lower than  
13 during the 1973 Arab oil embargo; and

14 WHEREAS, Commodities speculators took advantage of the  
15 combination of low levels of heating oil supply and colder than  
16 usual temperatures to drive up the price for heating oil on the  
17 New York Mercantile Exchange from 58¢ per gallon in mid-November

1 to \$1.02 per gallon on December 28; and

2 WHEREAS, The elimination of Federal grants to states reliant  
3 on heating oil, including Pennsylvania, to provide biweekly data  
4 on heating oil inventories and prices at the wholesale and  
5 retail level, left the Federal Government with no source of  
6 timely, reliable, compatible data with which to monitor heating  
7 oil markets; and

8 WHEREAS, Funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance  
9 Program and for the Weatherization Assistance Program has been  
10 cut each year since 1985; and

11 WHEREAS, Propane, an important source of fuel for mobile home  
12 dwellers and farm communities in Pennsylvania, which was selling  
13 at the wholesale level for 22¢ a gallon last year, sold for 70¢  
14 per gallon at the end of December with retail prices going over  
15 \$1 a gallon; and propane inventories were 25% less in October  
16 1989 than in October 1988; therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
18 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the Congress to provide  
19 to the appropriate Federal regulatory or oversight body greater  
20 controls, in particular, tighter margin limits, on the  
21 commodities markets for necessities like heating oil to prevent  
22 speculators from driving prices up to unreasonable levels; and  
23 be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
25 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the Congress to reject  
26 the President of the United States' proposal to cut the funding  
27 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program by 25% and the  
28 Weatherization Program by 85% in Federal fiscal year 1991; and  
29 should instead raise the funding level for next year's programs  
30 and provide supplemental assistance for this year; and be it

1 further

2 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
3 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the Congress to  
4 reinstate the federally supported heating oil monitoring system  
5 and expand it to include propane data; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
7 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the Congress to amend  
8 the Merchant Marine Act, 1920 (46 U.S.C. § 861 et seq.) to allow  
9 the movement of energy supplies by non-United States flag  
10 vessels during times of supply disruption; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
12 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the Congress to  
13 authorize that funding for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve be  
14 used to establish regional product reserves in the Northeast to  
15 ensure the availability of supply to consumers and exert a  
16 downward pressure on prices when supplies are short; and be it  
17 further

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the  
19 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the Congress to order  
20 an investigation to determine whether the oil companies violated  
21 Federal antitrust laws during the recent crisis and if  
22 violations exist to prosecute the guilty parties; and be it  
23 further

24 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to  
25 the presiding officers of each house of Congress and to each  
26 member of Congress from Pennsylvania.