

Washington, DC -- U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) sent a letter to newly confirmed U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Dr. Steven Chu requesting a meeting to brief him and other DOE officials in the new Obama Administration about the potential devastating impact of New York Regional Interconnection's (NYRI) proposed power line.

"The NYRI proposal is without question the most high-profile issue in my district, and the entire community is unified in opposition," **Arcuri wrote**. "The NYRI project poses significant risk to private landowners along the proposed route, threatens environmentally sensitive areas in the region, has potential negative implications for future economic development projects, and most importantly, will increase utility rates for families and business owners throughout Upstate New York without rectifying the congestion problem."

In his letter to Secretary Chu, Arcuri outlined changes made by the 2005 Energy Policy Act that could give NYRI the option to apply to have the project approved at the federal level, even if it is ultimately rejected by the New York State Public Service Commission. Arcuri asked to meet with the Secretary and other high-level Energy Department officials in the new Obama Administration to discuss the NYRI project as soon as possible. The letter also described the actions Arcuri has taken as Congressman to prevent the NYRI project from going forward.

"For nearly the last two years, I have worked diligently with U.S. Reps. Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) and John Hall (NY-19) to stop the NYRI project via legislative and regulatory action," Arcuri continued. "Together, we offered limitation amendments to appropriations bills prohibiting the Department of Energy from establishing NIETCs, and amendments to various energy bills considered in the House of Representatives to strip NYRI of federal eminent domain authority created under the Energy Policy Act of 2005. In addition, we have sent numerous letters to federal and state officials in opposition to the NYRI proposal, hosted public hearings, and aggressively outlined our opposition."

The text Arcuri's letter to Secretary Chu is included below.

February 4, 2009

The Honorable Dr. Steven Chu, Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Dr. Chu:

Congratulations on your recent confirmation as Secretary of Energy. My region of New York, like many areas of the country, faces a number of issues that pose potential economic hardship without intervention or support. I would like to take this opportunity to bring one of these issues to your attention, and ask for your thoughtful attention and assistance in the coming months.

New York Regional Interconnection (NYRI), a foreign owned, private utility company is seeking to build a 1200 mega watt, 190 mile bi-directional, high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission system extending from the Town of Marcy in Oneida County, NY to the Town of New Windsor in Orange County, NY. The NYRI proposal is without question the most high-profile issue in my district, and the entire community is unified in opposition.

NYRI's proposal is a direct result of special provisions in large part included in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-58), specifically Section 1221 that provides the Department of Energy the authority to designate National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (NIETCs), to alleviate congestion within which the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has authority to review and issue permits for electric transmission projects. Further, the law grants federal eminent domain authority to private companies seeking to construct transmission projects approved by FERC. The purpose of Section 1221 is to improve utility transmission, alleviate congestion and make the grid more efficient, but there is no proof that the NYRI proposal would do so.

The NYRI project poses significant risk to private landowners along the proposed route, threatens environmentally sensitive areas in the region, has potential negative implications for future economic development projects, and most importantly, will increase utility rates for families and business owners throughout Upstate New York without rectifying the congestion problem. For nearly the last two years, I have worked diligently with U.S. Reps. Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) and John Hall (NY-19) to stop the NYRI project via legislative and regulatory action. Together, we offered limitation amendments to appropriations bills prohibiting the Department of Energy from establishing NIETCs, and amendments to various energy bills

considered in the House of Representatives to strip NYRI of federal eminent domain authority created under the Energy Policy Act of 2005. In addition, we have sent numerous letters to federal and state officials in opposition to the NYRI proposal, hosted public hearings, and aggressively outlined our opposition.

I respectfully request the opportunity to meet with the appropriate Energy Department officials to discuss the NYRI project in the coming weeks. Thank you for your prompt attention and consideration of this matter. I look forward to working together with you on this and other issues in the coming years.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL A. ARCURI
Member of Congress

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