

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted again today for legislation to curb excessive speculation in the energy futures markets which has contributed to higher gas prices.

“There is one thing the experts agree on – energy speculation is playing games with oil and gas prices and hurting American families,” **Arcuri said**. “To give local families and businesses immediate relief from soaring gas prices, I voted today to reign in irresponsible speculation in the energy markets which will help bring down the cost of gas at the pump.”

The Commodity Market Transparency and Accountability Act (H.R. 6604) would take crucial steps to curb excessive speculation in the energy futures markets, close the Enron loophole, bring much-needed transparency to commodities and futures markets, and strengthen enforcement to prevent market manipulation and to prosecute fraud.

Experts have testified that excessive speculation in the energy future markets may be responsible for inflating oil prices by as much as \$20 to \$60 more per barrel. The International Monetary Fund recently concluded that, “speculation has played a significant role in the run-up of oil prices.” A new independent study by Masters Capital Management found that speculation by large investors was a primary reason for the surge in oil prices during the first half of the year, and the more recent price declines.

H.R. 6604 gives the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) the necessary tools to curtail excessive speculation and other practices distorting the energy market and restore market fundamentals of supply and demand. It also closes the Enron loophole which exempts all energy futures trading from oversight by the CFTC.

The legislation calls for the hiring of at least 100 new full-time CFTC employees to strengthen enforcement, to prevent manipulation and to prosecute fraud. Despite record trading volume in the futures markets, increasing 8000 percent, CFTC staffing is at its lowest level since the agency was created in 1974.

“Since Congress began hearings on oil speculation, gas prices have edged down because

speculators know they can't get away with highway robbery any longer – they know this Congress will hold them accountable,” **Arcuri continued**. “This bill works hand-in-hand with the comprehensive energy bill passed by the House this week, which will bring short-term relief to consumers, and invest in long term energy solutions to make America truly energy independent.”

On Tuesday, Arcuri voted for comprehensive energy legislation which includes the largest opening of land off-shore for oil and gas development in our nation's history, and invests in renewable energy sources to further lower energy prices and create more “green” jobs in Upstate New York.

The Comprehensive American Energy Security & Consumer Protection Act would expand land available for oil drilling by ending the current off-shore drilling moratorium and permitting drilling off-shore for states that offer leases to oil companies. It would also repeal tax break for oil companies and require oil companies to pay royalties already owed to taxpayers. Royalty payments would be invested in developing alternative/renewable energy sources.

This summer, the House passed, and Arcuri strongly supported, the Energy Markets Emergency Act (H.R. 6377) which also directed the CFTC to use its emergency powers to take immediate action to curb excessive speculation in energy markets.

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