

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) today described steps Congress has already taken to bring down gas prices and invest in new alternative energy sources – as well as new strategies he would also support – at Schuyler Wood Pellet’s plant which produces lower cost wood pellet fuel and has created new jobs in the Mohawk Valley since opening in December.

“Rising gas costs increase the price of food, putting hard-working families and seniors in a tenuous position of making ends meet,” **said Arcuri**. “To add insult to injury, the extra money we pay at the pumps only adds to the record-high profits of big oil companies. In Congress, I’ve been working to address this problem that Washington has ignored for decades. I’m here today to tell my constituents about what we’ve already done and what additional steps I support to change the direction of our energy policy.”

To Bring Down Gas Prices, Arcuri:

- Cosponsored the Strategic Petroleum Reserve Fill Suspension and Consumer Protection Act of 2008, (H.R. 5473), passed by the House and enacted by the President, to suspend all shipments to the SPR in 2008, until the average price of crude oil falls below \$50 a barrel. With the SPR over 95% full there is no risk to the nation’s overall strategic reserve or security and this will increase domestic supply and save consumers money. Shipments to the reserve were suspended today, June 30th.

- Voted for the Energy Markets Emergency Act (H.R.6377), passed by the House, which would take crucial steps to curb excessive speculation in the energy futures markets which has dramatically contributed to increased gas prices. It directs the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) use all its authority, including its emergency powers, to immediately curb the role of excessive speculation in any contract market trading energy futures or swaps.

- Cosponsored and voted for the Responsible Federal Oil and Gas Lease Act (H.R. 6251), which would prohibit oil companies from obtaining additional leases unless they can demonstrate that they are producing oil and gas, or are diligently developing the leases they already hold. Currently, there are 68 million acres onshore and offshore in the U.S that are leased by oil companies and are fully open to drilling but not yet developed. These lands contain 81% of America’s federal oil and gas reserves

- Cosponsored the Responsible Ownership of Public Lands Act (H.R. 6256) which would place an escalating fee on land that oil companies have leased but are not using for production by the third year of the lease, providing a strong incentive for oil companies to stop stockpiling these leases and begin using them.

- Cosponsored and voted for the Energy Price Gouging Prevention Act (H.R.6346) which would provide relief to consumers by giving the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) the authority to investigate and punish companies that artificially inflate the price of energy. Under the bill, the

Justice Department could impose criminal penalties of up to \$150 million on corporations, and fines of up to \$2 million and jail sentences of up to 10 years for individuals to crack down on wholesale and retail companies charging unconscionable and excessive prices.

- Last May, Arcuri voted for, and the House of Representatives passed, a similar bill, the Federal Energy Price Gouging Prevention Act (H.R. 1252) by a bipartisan majority.
- Voted for the No Oil Producing and Exporting Cartels Act (H.R. 2264), passed by the House, which would authorize the Justice Department to take legal action against OPEC state-controlled entities that conspire to limit the supply, or fix the price, of oil.

Arcuri also discussed legislation he has cosponsored and supported to foster increased energy efficiency and invest in new alternative energy sources, such as woody biomass energy sources like the pellets created at Schuyler Wood Pellet, that can reduce energy costs for local families and create good-paying jobs right here in Upstate New York.

“Let me be clear: this energy crisis demands our attention, and I believe Congress is already rising to the challenge,” **Arcuri said**. “But we won’t see a silver bullet solution overnight. We’ve taken a number of steps to bring critical relief, but there are many more long-term investments we must make. The United States must also develop bold and far-sighted plans for a new energy future, plans that will finally end our dependence on foreign oil, preserve our environment, and create new, high-paying jobs in Upstate New York.”

To Lower Costs for Consumers and Invest in Alternative Energy, Arcuri:

- Cosponsored the historic and bipartisan Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (H.R. 6), signed into law at the end of last year, which will increase vehicle fuel efficiency standards and help save American families \$700 to \$1,000 per year at the gas pump. New building, appliance and lighting efficiency standards included in the new law will save consumers \$400 billion through 2030. Additionally, the law invests in new “green collar” jobs through incentives and initiatives for American produced renewable energy.

- Voted for the Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act (H.R. 6052), passed by the House, which would provide \$1.7 billion in grants to mass transit authorities over the next two years to reduce public transit fares and give consumers a cost-effective alternative to gas above \$4 a gallon. Under the legislation, New York State would also receive \$6,770,700 in statewide funding for grants to public transit agencies that serve non-urbanized areas such as Cortland and Cayuga Counties.

- Voted for and managed debate on, the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act (H.R. 6049), passed by the House, which includes \$18 million in tax incentives for investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency to retain and create hundreds of thousands of green jobs. To reduce our dependence on foreign oil and to protect the environment, this legislation

extends and expands tax incentives for renewable electricity, energy and fuel from America's heartland, as well as for plug-in hybrid cars, and energy efficient homes, buildings, and appliances. H.R. 6049 also includes \$37 billion in tax cuts for American families and businesses, and closes loopholes allowing U.S. corporations and executives to avoid taxes by shipping jobs and investment overseas.

- Voted for the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (H.R. 2419), passed by the House, which provides \$1.1 billion to fund programs that will help the renewable energy industry invest in new technologies that use a variety of sources beyond feed grains. This includes \$320 million in loan guarantees for biorefineries that produce advanced biofuels and a new program to encourage the production of new biomass for cellulosic ethanol and other energy production, helping producers learn how to harvest, store, and transport biomass to bioenergy facilities.

Arcuri was joined by representatives from Schuyler Wood Pellet who addressed the benefits of locally produced alternative energy, such wood pellet to heat local homes, reduce energy costs for area families and create new jobs.

New England Wood Pellet's \$12 million Schuyler plant has been operating since December 2007 and has brought 18 direct and 75 indirect jobs to the Mohawk Valley region. At 100,000 tons per year, the plant is the largest wood pellet manufacturing facility in the northeastern United States. It produces enough renewable energy annually to heat 33,000 homes and infuses the local economy with some \$10 million in annual expenditures.

Schuyler Wood Pellet plant produces wood pellet fuel from a variety of clean wood waste, including sawdust, wood chips, shavings and grindings from wood product manufacturing plants throughout Upstate New York.

Arcuri also released the following outline of energy legislation:

U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri Energy Accomplishments in the 110th Congress

Signed Into Law

(12/19/2007) Public Law 110-140 – Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 – Historic energy legislation with provisions to: increase Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE)

standards to 35 miles per gallon by 2020; create new building, appliance and lighting efficiency standards included in the new law will save consumers \$400 billion through 2030; and create an Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Worker Training Program to train a quality workforce for “green collar” jobs created by federal renewable energy and energy efficiency initiatives.

(5/19/2008) Public Law 110-232 – Strategic Petroleum Reserve Fill Suspension and Consumer Protection Act of 2008 – to suspend the fill of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, starting June 30th and through the end of the year, as long as the price of crude oil remains above \$75 per barrel. This is a critical first step for hardworking families, businesses and the economy, which in the past has brought gas prices down. The President, who was previously opposed, suspended shipments and signed the bill because of overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress.

(6/18/2008) Public Law 11-261 – Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 – the new Farm Bill increases Commodity Futures Trading Commission oversight authority to detect and prevent manipulation of energy prices. The law also provides \$1.1 billion to fund programs that will help the renewable energy industry invest in new technologies that use a variety of sources beyond feed grains. This includes \$320 million in loan guarantees for biorefineries that produce advanced biofuels and a new program to encourage the production of new biomass for cellulosic ethanol and other energy production, helping producers learn how to harvest, store, and transport biomass to bioenergy facilities.

Voted For and House Passed (Awaiting Action in the Senate)

(2/8/07) H.R. 547 – The Advanced Fuels Infrastructure Research and Development Act – to direct the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement a program of research and development of materials to be added to biofuels to make them more compatible with existing infrastructure used to store and deliver petroleum-based fuels to the point of final sale.

(3/12/2007) H.R. 85 - Energy Technology Transfer Act to improve an existing Department of Energy grant program that is intended to encourage the use of energy efficiency through the transfer of information from the research sector to businesses and governments.

(5/22/2007) H.R. 2264 – No Oil Producing and Exporting Cartels Act – to authorize the Justice Department to take legal action against OPEC state-controlled entities that participate in conspiracies to limit the supply, or fix the price, of oil.

(6/6/2007) H.R. 1716 - Green Energy Education Act - making funds available for the National Science Foundation (NSF) program to support graduate education related to research, development and commercial applications of energy technology and also NSF's curriculum development activities to improve undergraduate and graduate education in the design and construction of high-performance buildings.

(2/27/08) H.R. 5351 – Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2008 - extending: (1) the Production Tax Credit (PTC), for electricity generated from renewable resources, through 2011; (2) the energy tax credit for solar energy and fuel cell property through 2016; (3) the tax credit for residential energy efficient property expenditures through 2014; (4) the tax credit for alternative fuel vehicle refueling property expenditures through 2010; (5) the tax credit for biodiesel and renewable diesel used as fuel through 2010; and (6) the tax deduction for energy efficient commercial buildings through 2013. The bill creates new tax credits for: (1) investment in new clean renewable energy bonds and qualified energy conservation bonds; and (2) the production of plug-in hybrid motor vehicles, cellulosic alcohol fuel, and electricity from marine and hydrokinetic renewable energy sources.

(5/20/2008) H.R. 6074 – Gas Price Relief for Consumers Act – to authorize the Justice Department to take legal action against OPEC state-controlled entities that participate in conspiracies to limit the supply, or fix the price, of oil. The bill also creates a new Department of Justice Petroleum Industry Antitrust Task Force to examine the existence and effects of price gouging in the sale of gasoline, anticompetitive price discrimination by petroleum refiners, unilateral actions to withhold supply in order to inflate the prices, and manipulation in futures markets.

(6/26/2008) H.R. 6377 – Energy Markets Emergency Act – to curb the excessive speculation in the energy futures markets which has dramatically contributed to increased gas prices by directing the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to use all its authority, including its emergency powers, to immediately curb the role of excessive speculation in any contract market trading energy futures or swaps.

Voted for in the House (Did not Pass):

(6/24/2008) H.R. 6346 – Federal Price Gouging Prevention Act – to impose criminal penalties of up to \$150 million on corporations and jail sentences of up to 10 years to crack down on wholesale and retail companies charging unconscionable and excessive prices. Penalties levied against these price gougers would go to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which is a block grant program under which the federal government gives states, territories, and tribes annual grants to operate home energy assistance programs for

low-income households.

(6/26/2008) H.R. 6256 – Responsible Ownership of Public Lands Act – to prohibit oil companies from obtaining any more leases unless they can demonstrate that they are producing oil and gas, or are diligently developing the leases they already hold. Similar--and effective--rules already apply to coal companies. This would provide a strong incentive for oil companies to stop stockpiling these leases and begin using them.

(8/4/2007) Amendment to H.R. 3221 for a National Renewable Electricity Standard – to require electric suppliers, other than governmental entities and rural electric cooperatives, to provide 15 percent of their electricity using renewable energy resources by the year 2020.

Legislation Co-Sponsored by Rep. Arcuri:

H.R. 197 – a 5-year extension of the Production Tax Credit (PTC) – extending the tax credit for electricity produced from renewable energy facilities such as wind, closed-loop biomass, open-loop biomass, geothermal, small irrigation power, municipal solid waste (landfill gas and trash combustion) through 2014. The current PTC is set to expire January 1, 2009.

H.R. 969 – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard – to require that retail sellers of electricity to use a minimum amount of electricity from renewable sources of energy, increasing annually to 20% of our overall electricity use by 2020.

H.R. 1300 – The PROGRESS Act – to establish a National Commission on Energy Security and Transition to New Fuels to make recommendations to Congress and the President for: (1) preserving the national energy security in the event of a terrorist attack or natural disaster; and (2) reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil over a specified period. The bill would also create a grant program to provide assistance to retail and wholesale motor fuel dealers or other entities to install, replace, or convert motor fuel storage and dispensing infrastructure for use in the storage and dispensing of biobased fuels and require: (1) the production and distribution of biobased fuels (ethanol) and deployment of new engine technologies for fuel-flexible, hybrid, plug-in hybrid, and biodiesel vehicles; (2) greater use of alternative fuels in dual fueled vehicles operating in the federal fleet; and (3) the increase and expansion of employer-provided mass transit fringe benefits. It would also create a capital grant program for the rehabilitation, preservation, or improvement of railroad track owned by short-line railroads.

H.R. 670 – Dependence Reduction through Innovation in Vehicles Energy (DRIVE) Act – to enact various provisions related to increasing fuel efficiency of passenger vehicles, expanding transit and reducing vehicle miles traveled. It would also prescribe minimum annual quantities of renewable fuel from cellulosic biomass, require at least a 20% reduction in the federal fleets' petroleum consumption (including that at least 30% of federal vehicles required to be alternative fuel vehicles be flex-fuel hybrid or flex-fuel plug-in hybrid vehicles), and create a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle prize program.

H.R. 1506 – Fuel Economy Reform Act – would mandate a projected level of average fuel economy of at least 27.5 mpg for vehicles up to 10,000 pounds beginning in model year 2012, and increasing to 35 mpg by model year 2018 (similar provisions were incorporated into legislation that became Public Law 110-140).

H.R. 6251 – Responsible Federal Oil and Gas Lease Act – to assess an escalating fee on land that oil companies have leased but are not using for production or diligently developing by the third year of the lease. The revenue raised from these fees will go towards renewable energy and energy efficiency investments that will reduce dependence on oil, as well as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which is a block grant program under which the federal government gives states, territories, and tribes annual grants to operate home energy assistance programs for low-income households.

H.R. 6264 – The Consumer Oil Price Protection Act – to prohibit trading in crude oil, heating oil, gasoline, or diesel fuel derivatives on the over-the-counter commodities trading market by anyone who was not an actual oil company or gasoline supplier (by restricting trading authority to only those actors with the “the capacity to accept physical delivery of the commodity”). This would eliminate unregulated futures trading by energy speculators that artificially drive up the price of oil and other energy commodities.

H.R. 4275 – Keeping Americans Warm Act – to provide an additional \$1 billion in contingency Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding. LIHEAP is a block grant program under which the federal government gives states, territories, and tribes annual grants to operate home energy assistance programs for low-income households. (\$569 million dollars in contingency LIHEAP funding was included in the Fiscal Year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Act (Public Law 110-161).)

H.R. 1705 – BRIGHT Energy Savings Act of 2007 – to require that only energy efficient light fixtures or bulbs be used in Government buildings for all new construction or the replacement of any existing fixture or bulb (similar provisions were incorporated into legislation that became Public Law 110-140).

###