

Washington, DC -- Today, U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) and fellow Upstate New York Congressmen expressed their renewed opposition to the New York Regional Interconnection power line proposal following the Department of Energy's (DOE) final designation of a Mid-Atlantic Area National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor (NIETC). The Mid-Atlantic designation remains unchanged from the draft designation that was announced in April.

"Despite the thunderous objections of the very people most affected by this corridor, DOE has ignored local demands and designated a corridor that opens up the opportunity for NYRI to knife a scar through our communities," **said Arcuri**. "I will continue to fight tirelessly in Washington to make sure NYRI never gets that opportunity. This corridor is not only unsound energy policy and an economic disaster for Upstate New York, but it has been executed with an astounding disregard for local governments and residents. This disingenuous process has consistently shown a total lack of respect for the people of Upstate New York. Everything about DOE's designation procedure seems shockingly arbitrary, from where the corridor was located to who was involved in the process. I will not stand by as the DOE beings a process to allow utility companies to run roughshod over local communities and take private property from landowners. This is not the end of our fight, only the beginning."

"DOE's announcement to charge ahead with its Mid-Atlantic Corridor in the face of local opposition, state concerns, and a lack of demonstrated need flies in the face of common sense and is a huge mistake," said **Rep. John Hall (D-Dover Plains)**. "I am shocked that the federal government would move forward with its plan to give eminent domain authority to private, for-profit companies without any acknowledgment of the serious objections from the communities that the New York Regional Interconnect would run through, the environmental impacts of the corridor, or the rights of local property owners. DOE has made the wrong choice by shrugging aside the overwhelming opposition to this corridor, and I am committed to working with my colleagues to stop this plan dead in its tracks."

"The fact that the Department of Energy refused to even slightly modify its NIETC proposal for the Mid-Atlantic region after receiving more than 2,000 public comments on the matter, the vast majority of which surely opposed the plan, clearly indicates that the public comment period was nothing more than a public relations stunt to give the perception that the public was included in the agency's decision. The reality is the only thing that matters to the DOE is how much more of a profit it can create for the energy industry," **said Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-Hurley)**. "We are engaged in an historic fight with the Department of Energy and are going to work day and night to block these designations and prevent NYRI from constructing massive power lines through upstate New York that no one wants. We will pursue every legislative and legal avenue to ensure that the constitutional rights of states and private property owners are protected."

Since taking office in January, Arcuri has consistently sought to prevent NYRI from using federal eminent domain to acquire private property:

- In August, Arcuri introduced an amendment, along with fellow Representatives Maurice Hinchey (D-Hurley) and John Hall (D-Dover Plains), to the New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act (H.R. 3221) which would have prevented energy companies from using federal eminent domain power to condemn private property. The company would have been forced to use the state eminent domain process. Because of the revisions of the state eminent domain law signed by Governor Pataki in 2006, NYRI would then have been unable to use New York's eminent domain procedures – leaving them without any eminent domain power to take private property. The amendment, which had the support of Governor Spitzer as well as national environmental groups, was not adopted.

- In June, an amendment was introduced by Hinchey and Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), and supported by Arcuri and Hall that would have prohibited DOE from using funds to designate any geographic area as a national interest electric transmission corridor.

- In June, Arcuri hosted public meetings in New Hartford and Norwich to allow local residents to voice their concerns.

- In May, Arcuri sent a formal letter to U.S. Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman, outlining his strong opposition to the DOE's decision to host public meetings outside of New York's 24th district.

- In March, Arcuri successfully amended the Rail & Public Transportation Security Act to require the Departments of Homeland Security and Transportation to evaluate the safety and security of placing high voltage direct current electric transmission power lines along active railroad rights-of-way.

- In February, Arcuri, Hall, and Hinchey introduced two pieces of legislation which would effectively block NYRI from being able to use federal eminent domain law to condemn private property along the proposed route.

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