

By: Senator(s) Simmons, Horhn, Walls

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 555

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING CONGRESS TO APPROPRIATE
2 ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO ASSIST THE ELDERLY AND LOW-INCOME CITIZENS OF
3 THIS STATE WITH THEIR NATURAL GAS BILLS, AND TO TAKE ANY
4 REGULATORY ACTION NECESSARY TO ADDRESS THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN
5 THE PRICE OF NATURAL GAS.

6 WHEREAS, natural gas is an essential commodity which is used
7 by individuals primarily for cooking and heating; and

8 WHEREAS, the demand for natural gas has increased in recent
9 years because of a number of factors, including colder winter
10 temperatures, the start of operations at new gas-fired electric
11 power generating units, and increased new home construction, which
12 in turn increases the use of natural gas for cooking and heating;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, the supply of natural gas has remained fairly flat
15 over the past few years and although exploration and development
16 of natural gas has increased this past year, the increase has yet
17 to be reflected in the market; and

18 WHEREAS, because of a lag in supply in response to a recent
19 surge in demand, the market has reacted by increasing the average
20 wellhead price for natural gas; and

21 WHEREAS, residential customers of natural gas are expected to
22 pay as much as 40% more on their natural gas bills this winter as
23 compared to last winter, in response to the increased wellhead
24 price for natural gas; and

25 WHEREAS, the rapid rise in natural gas prices over the last
26 few months has raised concerns about the effect those increases
27 will have on citizens of this state, particularly the elderly and

28 those with a low income who are unable to absorb the increased
29 costs because of income and budget constraints; and

30 WHEREAS, the dramatic increase in natural gas prices could
31 potentially affect the health and comfort of Mississippi citizens,
32 and in some cases could even be life threatening, if persons are
33 disconnected this winter because they are unable to pay their
34 natural gas utility bill; and

35 WHEREAS, while there are currently some government and
36 utility provided low-income energy assistance programs available
37 to persons on a limited budget, because of the extreme situation
38 citizens of this state are facing, those programs will probably
39 not be able to assist everyone who will be in need; and

40 WHEREAS, Mississippi recognizes the need to provide
41 additional financial assistance to the elderly and low-income
42 citizens of this state to help them pay for the higher cost of
43 natural gas; and

44 WHEREAS, Mississippi further recognizes that additional
45 regulations and investigative hearings by the Federal Energy
46 Regulatory Commission may be needed to solve this natural gas
47 dilemma:

48 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
49 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
50 we do hereby memorialize Congress to appropriate additional funds
51 to assist the elderly and low-income citizens of this state with
52 their natural gas bills, and to take any regulatory action
53 necessary to address the dramatic increase in the price of natural
54 gas.

55 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
56 furnished to President George W. Bush; the Mississippi
57 congressional delegation; Curt Hebert, Jr., Chairman of the
58 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; and be presented to the
59 Capitol Press Corps.