SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 555

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, the rapid rise in natural gas prices over the last few months has raised concerns about the effect those increases will have on citizens of this state, particularly the elderly and
those with a low income who are unable to absorb the increased
costs because of income and budget constraints; and

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

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

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

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

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

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