

ENERGY COMPANIES HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE... WHY DON'T YOU?

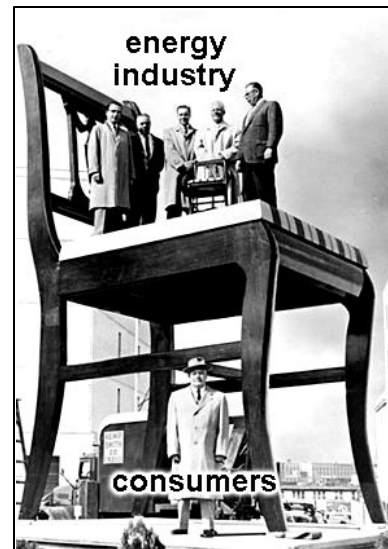


The Associated Press reported recently that “Congressional Republicans are cobbling together an energy blueprint substantially more favorable to industry than a Senate-passed bill hailed by Democrats as a victory this summer.”¹ Not only Democrats, but other Republican lawmakers (and the *New York Times*, among other newspapers) have expressed outrage at the way the energy conference committee has operated, excluding from negotiations all but a few Republican lawmakers bent on drafting a **dream bill for their energy industry campaign contributors** while leaving the public in the dark.

This new legislation, which includes full repeal of the vital consumer protection law the Public Utility Holding Company Act (PUHCA), promises to lead to drastic consolidation of the energy market—of the kind endorsed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the media sector—bringing higher electricity prices and decreased reliability (read: more blackouts). We believe that **utility ratepayers, environmentalists, taxpayers, voters, concerned citizens**, and other groups interested in and affected by federal energy policy should also have a “**seat at the table**” in order to protect consumers and hold the industry accountable!

Last year, **Westar Energy** paid over **\$56,000** to get a “seat at the table,” and was rewarded with a special exemption in the conference committee bill (until related bank loan indictments forced it to be withdrawn). Internal company emails laid out in detail the necessity of contributions to representatives Billy Tauzin (R-LA), Joe Barton (R-TX) and Tom DeLay (R-TX) for an influence over public policy. Despite the attempt at bribery, Barton and Tauzin declined to exempt themselves from the current energy bill conference committee.

Now is your chance to demand **a seat at the table** for **consumers, ratepayers, taxpayers, citizens, environmentalists, public interest representatives, and others** concerned about the energy bill—and you won’t need \$56,000.



Bring your own seat to Upper Senate Park on Wednesday, October 8th from 12-1pm

(corner of Constitution Ave., between New Jersey Ave. and Delaware Ave.; Union Station metro [red line].)

Help us illustrate all the groups that never got a seat at the table. Just show up with lunch and a chair of any kind: **lawn chair, beach chair, stadium seat, picnic bench, toy chair, office chair, recliner**, whatever seat you can bring to the energy bill table, along with a sign designating whom the seat is for: consumers, bill payers, etc. If you can’t do that, just bring a friend. We’ll bring the media, and representatives from Public Citizen, Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS), and other groups will be present to explain the worst of the energy bill’s provisions and how we can work for positive change instead.

Don’t be square, bring a chair!!

¹ “Emerging Energy Blueprint Reflects Industry,” *Houston Chronicle*; September 28, 2003; <http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/business/2125723>.