



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.—Kans.)

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DOLE SAYS STRIPPING OF K.C. DOE APPEALS OFFICE 'MAKES LITTLE SENSE'

WASHINGTON -- In a letter sent today to Energy Secretary James Schlesinger by Sens. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) and Thomas Eagleton (D-Mo.), the two senators decried the Department of Energy's decision yesterday to reduce the powers of the Kansas City Office of Hearings and Appeals, making it little more than a satellite of the Chicago regional office. The DOE decision came only one day after Sen. Eagleton held hearings in the Senate on the matter, at which Dole testified.

Following is the text of the Dole-Eagleton letter:

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We were disappointed to learn that the Office of Hearings and Appeals has proceeded with plans to reduce the powers of five of its regional offices, including the Region VII office in Kansas City.

It makes little sense to strip half of OHA's regional offices of all decision-making ability at a time of unprecedented need. While Region VII was only considering 20 cases on March 7 of this year, the workload had increased to 290 cases by May 25. Each one of these pending cases involves a dealer or supplier whose continued financial viability depends upon the timely consideration of the appeal. Many of the appeals have been pending for some time. We are concerned that these 300 cases will be delayed even further if they are sent to a Chicago Regional Center for final disposition along with hundreds of other appeals already pending in Chicago.

We are also concerned about the decline in accessibility of the Office of Hearings and Appeals. As you know, many businessmen, unsophisticated in dealing with the government, are now facing rapidly changing and immensely complicated government energy regulations. This is particularly difficult during this time of severe shortages. Those confronted with a regulation that unfairly impacts them need prompt and convenient means for relief. We fear that the consumers of Kansas and Missouri will face added barriers and delay in dealing with distant Chicago.

We raised these concerns during the June 12 hearings of the Senate Governmental Efficiency Subcommittee. Melvin Goldstein also testified at that hearing. We are particularly distressed that the decision to implement this proposal was made only one day after we expressed these concerns, with no effort to address the questions raised. We would hope that the Department of Energy would consider and respond to the views of many Midwesterners before going ahead with plans so important to them.

Sincerely yours,

BOB DOLE
United States Senate

THOMAS F. EAGLETON
United States Senate