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For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, has taken steps to prevent federal authority from overruling state authority in locating proposed high power transmission lines across Pennsylvania to serve other states.

He announced today that he has cosponsored legislation (H.R. 809) that would repeal the federal authority granted under Section 1221 of the 2005 Energy Policy Act. That provision gave the federal government new ability to bypass state regulatory authority over regional power transmission lines. Late last week, the Department of Energy exercised its new authority for the first time under the two year old law, by designating a number of proposed regional transmission lines as "National Interest Energy Transmission Corridors," or NIETCs. This designation effectively paves the way for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to approve the lines even if the Pennsylvania Utility Commission does not approve them.

Additionally, Congressman Murtha plans to pursue appropriations language that would block the FERC from acting in this capacity.

Murtha and several Members of Congress whose areas are affected by the designations sent a letter to the subcommittee of jurisdiction stating, "We are and will remain strongly opposed to allowing FERC to usurp the power of state licensing authorities in power line siting decisions within designated NIETCs by granting private corporations the power of eminent domain to seize private property along proposed transmission routes."

"We respectfully request that you support the rights and interests of states and local communities by inserting a funding limitation...to halt the implementation of this program before it adversely impacts irreplaceable national and state assets..."

The Department of Energy's NIETC designations would allow 500 to 700 kilowatt transmission lines to cross hundreds of miles of Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia and Arizona regions, including some National Park lands, protected scenic areas and designated heritage areas.

Murtha noted, "I'm interested in ensuring that Pennsylvania's energy needs as well as the nation's energy needs are met. However, this new federal authority to run high power lines from low-cost, high-generating capacity regions like the Ohio Valley across several states to serve the east coast is letting the federal government off the hook for finding more comprehensive energy solutions at the expense of the people in our area, and they're not benefiting from it. In fact, they

may actually have to help pay for it in the form of higher electricity rates. We have to find a fairer solution."