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For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - Mark Critz, District Director for Congressman John P. Murtha, presented the following testimony today to the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission on behalf of the Congressman, who was unable to testify in person due to House votes in Washington, D.C.

Good Afternoon. I am here today to testify on behalf of Congressman John P. Murtha in opposition to the application of Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line Company (TrAIL) for authorization "to locate and construct high voltage electric transmission lines" across Pennsylvania for the primary purpose of supplying electricity to states to the east of Pennsylvania.

According to its application, TrAIL seeks authority to "locate, construct, operate and maintain certain high voltage electric substation facilities," to "exercise the power of eminent domain for the construction and installation of electric transmission facilities along the proposed transmission routes in Pennsylvania" and to be "exempt from municipal zoning regulation."

Congressman Murtha publicly stated his opposition to this plan last spring and worked at the federal level to prevent the U.S. Department of Energy from exercising new federal authority to designate National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (NIETCs). This new authority was granted by the 2005 Energy Policy Act.

On April 26, 2007, the Department of Energy issued a draft (NIETC) designation affecting 50 counties in Pennsylvania, including several in the 12th Congressional District.

In response, Congressman Murtha cosponsored legislation (H.R. 809) that would repeal the relevant section of the Energy Policy Act.

Additionally, on May 15, 2007, Congressman Murtha joined with 43 other Members of Congress in writing a letter to the US Department of Energy opposing the designation. In the letter, he and his Colleagues stated, "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..."

Further, Congressman Murtha voted twice to block the designation, on an amendment to an Appropriations measure that would have prevented the Department of Energy from implementing the designation. However, the amendment failed to pass in the full Appropriations Committee. Subsequently, the amendment was again offered on the House Floor, on June 20, 2007. It was again defeated, by a vote of 174 - 257.

Therefore, despite the clear opposition of 174 Members of Congress, many of whom represent affected homeowners and communities, the Department of Energy moved forward with the NIETC designation.

The response to Congress's letter from Energy Secretary Samuel W. Bodman, dated June 28, 2007, stated in part: "Designation would not necessarily result in Federal preemption of State jurisdiction to site transmission facilities in a National Corridor" and "would not endorse any particular transmission project or approve any particular siting or location for any transmission facility."

This is an important point because it underscores the fact that the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission still has the authority to reject this particular proposal.

As Congressman Murtha noted back in May, he is not opposed to ensuring Pennsylvania's energy needs are met.

What he is opposed to is running high power lines from low-cost, high-generating-capacity regions like the Ohio Valley across Pennsylvania homes and communities to serve the East Coast. He believes the NIETC designation, and this proposal in particular, are letting the government off the hook for finding fairer and more comprehensive energy solutions at the expense of the people in our area, who are not benefiting from it.

In fact, Congressman Murtha is concerned that Pennsylvanians may actually end up helping to pay for the project in the form of higher electricity rates.

Congressman Murtha also remains concerned about the potential hazards of locating these high-power lines close to existing homes and communities, as well as the impact the lines will have on property values. He is further concerned about the implications of granting the power of eminent domain to a private entity.

For this reason, Congressman Murtha strongly urges the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission to heed the voices of the thousands of affected Pennsylvanians who have banded together and clearly indicated their strong opposition to this proposal and to reject it.

Thank you.