

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

For Immediate Release  
February 5, 2007

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**WOLF, DAVIS ANNOUNCE STEPS TO ADDRESS POWER LINE CONCERNS**

Washington, D.C. – As part of their ongoing effort to address concerns about high voltage transmission lines being sited across much of northern Virginia, Rep. Frank Wolf (R-10th) and Rep. Tom Davis (R-11th) today announced action in three legislative areas:

\* They are original co-sponsors of legislation introduced today to repeal the section of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that authorized the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to designate National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (NIETC) and /or grant permits for projects in those corridors.

\* They are the primary sponsors of legislation seeking to clarify provisions in the 2005 act in case Hinchey's bill is not approved before DOE makes its first designations this spring. Among other things, Wolf and Davis's measure would require that the historical significance of an area be considered when designating a corridor. Language in the bill would affect any DOE designation after February 5, 2007.

\* Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), chairman of the Domestic Policy subcommittee of the Government Reform Committee, has agreed to hold a hearing on this issue.

The first measure, whose primary sponsor is Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), would strip the authority of the federal government to overrule local and state decisions in permitting the siting of transmission lines, even if they were in the "national interest" as allowed in the 2005 energy bill. Hinchey's bill stems from his efforts to prevent a proposal by New York Regional Interconnection Inc. to run transmission lines from Oneida County, NY, to Orange County, NY.

Wolf and Davis's efforts are an outgrowth of the controversy surrounding Dominion Virginia Power's proposal to build 550-kilovolt power lines through parts of Frederick, Warren, Fauquier and Prince William counties before ending in southern Loudoun County. Their bill seeks to clarify four areas of concern: scenic and cultural resources; energy efficiency; landowner compensation, and state authority.

"Clearly, better guidelines need to be established as these energy corridors are developed," Wolf said. "We just can't have huge transmission power lines cutting through existing neighborhoods or over huge swaths of open space, especially historically significant land.

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“Some common sense needs to be applied to what is being done,” Wolf continued. “These proposed changes, I believe, will help address many of the concerns we are seeing arising in Virginia. But I hope my colleagues in Congress will recognize that this isn’t just a Virginia issue. Every area of the country could confront the same controversy we’re seeing in the siting of transmission lines.”

“This legislation aims to keep the decision in the hands of state regulators which is where it belongs. I am making every effort to ensure that if an application is denied by the Virginia State Corporation Commission, the federal government cannot step in and overturn that ruling.” Davis said. “Make no mistake, I want to stop these power lines and I believe the best place to do that is at the state level.”

Below is a summary of Wolf and Davis’s bill reflecting the four areas of concern:

### **Scenic and Cultural Resources**

\* The secretary of Energy must take into consideration historical significance and the value of natural landscapes as one of the criteria for designation of a NIETC.

\* NIETC designations may not include lands protected by federal or state laws for their scenic, natural, cultural or historic value.

\* Each federal agency affected by the construction of the transmission line will be required to issue its own Record of Decision for the environmental review by the Department of Energy to ensure that the regulations and mandates of each individual agency are addressed.

\* Decisions by federal agencies to deny required approval or permitting for construction of a transmission line cannot be appealed to the president.

### **Energy Efficiency**

\* Before designation of a NIETC, a study and public comment period on all alternative methods to relieve electric transmission congestion constraints other than building new transmission lines are required. Alternatives would not only have to be considered individually, but also how several methods could be used together to solve the problem.

\* Each application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) must include an engineering study of the feasibility of placing the transmission line underground.

### **Landowner Compensation**

\* Landowners who are able to show a 10 percent reduction in the value of their property

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because of the construction of the transmission line are entitled to payment by the transmission company.

### **State Authority**

\* If the state regulatory authority denies an application for an interstate transmission line, that decision may only be appealed to the FERC if the applicant can prove to FERC that the decision lacked merit.

\* If the state regulatory authority does not make a final decision within a year of a request being filed for permits to build a new transmission line, the FERC may only obtain jurisdiction if it determines that there is no rational basis for the delay.