

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12), senior Democrat on the Natural Resources Committee’s Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, today urged Speaker of the House John Boehner to restore proper funding for the Energy Information Administration (EIA) after the agency sustained a cut of 14 percent in the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act passed by Congress earlier this month.

In the letter Rep. Holt writes, “The American people want smart, constructive solutions to our nation’s energy problems, and they deserve action based on nothing less than the highest quality, most timely information and analysis.”

The full text of the letter is included below.

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April 29, 2011

The Honorable John A. Boehner

Speaker

United States House of Representatives

H-232, The Capitol

Washington, D.C. 20515-0001

Dear Speaker Boehner:

Consumers around the country are once again facing sharp increases in gasoline prices. On Wednesday, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) reported that the average retail price of gasoline in the U.S. increased for the fifth week in a row to \$3.88 per gallon. As Congress works to address this issue, it is vital that we have timely, reliable, transparent, and unbiased information on the relationship between energy and the U.S. economy. We must make our decisions using the best facts and evidence, not ideology. That is why I was troubled, but not surprised, to learn that severe cuts contained in the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act will prevent EIA from providing the impartial information and analysis that we must rely on to make wise policy decisions.

As you know, the mission of the EIA is to collect, analyze, and disseminate independent and impartial energy information to promote sound policymaking, efficient markets, and public understanding of energy and its interaction with the economy and the environment. The Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act passed by Congress earlier this month reduces Fiscal Year 2011 funding for the EIA by 14 percent compared to Fiscal Year 2010. The Administrator of the EIA reported yesterday that this reduction will “require significant cuts in EIA’s data, analysis, and forecasting activities.” With respect to oil and natural gas information, the effect of this lack of funding will include the following:

EIA will be unable to prepare or publish the 2011 edition of the annual data release on U.S. proved oil and natural gas reserves.

EIA will curtail efforts to understand linkages between physical energy markets and financial trading.

EIA will suspend analysis and reporting on the market impacts of planned refinery outages.

EIA will curtail collection and dissemination of monthly state-level data on wholesale petroleum product prices, including gasoline, diesel, heating oil, propane, residual fuel oil, and kerosene.

EIA will terminate the preparation and publication of the annual petroleum marketing data report and the fuel oil and kerosene sales report.

EIA will suspend auditing of data submitted by major oil and natural gas companies and reporting on their 2010 financial performance through the agency's Financial Reporting System.

EIA will reduce collection of data from natural gas marketing companies.

EIA will cancel the planned increase in resources to be applied to petroleum data quality issues.

EIA will reduce data collection from smaller entities across a range of EIA oil and natural gas surveys.

As gas prices continue to rise, it is unacceptable to have a gap in information and analysis on oil and gas data. I respectfully request that you work with the Appropriations Committee to bring a bill to the floor that will restore full funding for the EIA at the Fiscal Year 2010 level for the remainder of the current fiscal year. Without this action, we will be reliant on Big Oil companies for oil and gas data during a critical time for U.S. consumers and our economy. The American people want smart, constructive solutions to our nation's energy problems, and they deserve action based on nothing less than the highest quality, most timely information and analysis.

Sincerely,

RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi

Democratic Leader

The Honorable Harold Rogers

Chairman

Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Norm Dicks

Ranking Member

Committee on Appropriations