

## Murphy Amendment Forces FERC to Hold Public Meeting on Candlewood Lake

On the eve of Congressman Chris Murphy's (CT-5) intention to offer an amendment to an energy bill to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to hold local public meetings before issuing any land use decisions, Murphy received a call from the federal agency - FERC will reverse its previous position and grant a public meeting on Candlewood Lake in western Connecticut.

Contact: Kristen Bossi  
(202) 225-4476

NEW BRITAIN – On the eve of Congressman Chris Murphy's (CT-5) intention to offer an amendment to an energy bill to require the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to hold local public meetings before issuing any land use decisions, Murphy received a call from the federal agency - FERC will reverse its previous position and grant a public meeting on Candlewood Lake in western Connecticut.

"Sometimes asking nicely isn't enough. When FERC knew that I was about to offer an amendment to the energy bill to draw national attention to this problem, they gave the Candlewood Lake area property owners what they needed by agreeing to a public meeting," said Murphy.

Murphy has worked tirelessly to secure a public meeting for residents of the Candlewood Lake area, who have concerns about FERC's draft shoreline management plan (SMP), which will be used to guide the management of the land surrounding Candlewood Lake. FERC issued a ruling in early July to finalize the SMP, and is now considering a reconsideration of the ruling.

Residents of the Candlewood Lake area, local elected officials, former Congresswoman Nancy Johnson, and Murphy have all requested that FERC hold a public meeting on its SMP. These requests have been denied, so Murphy introduced legislation to ensure that FERC must allow for more public input in future land use decisions. Last week, Murphy also introduced this legislation as an amendment to the energy bill. When House leaders scheduled a vote on the Murphy amendment on Saturday, FERC reversed its decision and agreed to give Candlewood Lake a meeting. Murphy is working with the agency on the details of the meeting, and will announce the date, time and location as soon as possible. Meanwhile, Murphy will also move forward with his legislation so that other communities aren't put in a similar situation when dealing with FERC.

"Public policymakers cannot and should not act without the input of citizens who will be affected by the decisions that they make – and neither should federal agencies. Unfortunately, Candlewood Lake residents were left with little recourse when FERC denied them a public meeting on the shoreline management plan. I am pleased that FERC has reversed its position and granted a public meeting," said Murphy.

In 2004, FERC reissued Candlewood Lake's license, and the agency began the process of drafting a new SMP. The purpose of the SMP is to lay out how the owner of the lake and the public will manage the natural resources surrounding its facilities. During the drafting process and since the draft SMP was released, FERC has refused to hold a public meeting in the Candlewood Lake area to take comments. While FERC is required to have an open comment period before they issue a rule, there is currently no statute or regulation to require them to hold a meeting in an affected locality.

Many lake area residents have concerns with the SMP to share. For example, the plan sets a fee scale on Candlewood Lake residents on any property on company land, including docks, decks, gazebos, and sea walls. Some lake-side property owners objected to the imposition of these fees, and though the new ownership company has agreed to seek other revenue sources to offset the need for resident fees, these assurances have not been included in the SMP.

# # #