



Minnesota House of Representatives

Republican Caucus

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NEWS RELEASE

HOUSE REPUBLICANS UNVEIL MINNESOTA'S

"DECLARATION OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

FALCON HEIGHTS – As Minnesotans continue to deal with high prices at the gas pump and face soaring heating costs next winter, House Republicans today unveiled their "Minnesota Declaration of Energy Independence" at the Minnesota State Fair.

Fairgoers are invited to visit the Republican fair booth and sign their names to the declaration, showing public support for reasonable energy policies. The declaration includes the House Republican plan to make gas, electricity and natural gas more affordable.

"Energy problems aren't below ground, they're above ground. If state government would allow the marketplace to produce reliable energy at the most affordable price, the cost of energy will go down." said State Representative Steve Drazkowski. "We're leading with a real energy plan that will bring lower energy prices, boost our struggling economy, and strengthen Minnesota family budgets."

The Republicans' plan would remove the blockade against nuclear power, reduce regulations that slowdown development of new energy supplies, provide tax exemptions for alternative energy production and promote ways to develop renewable energy supplies.

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House Republican Leader Marty Seifert said that Republicans will also oppose further efforts by Minnesota Democrats to make energy more expensive, such as imposing electric energy tariffs and “cap-and-trade” schemes that regulate energy beyond what Minnesotans can afford.

“House Republicans intend on making affordable energy one of our top legislative priorities in 2009. Seniors on fixed incomes and families already stretched thin can’t afford another session led by legislators who turned a blind eye to how energy costs are breaking family budgets,” Seifert said.

Early predictions for home heating bills this winter give a potential look at the cost of inaction by Democrat leadership. Recent news reports cite natural gas bills growing to average \$1,400 this winter, up from \$1,000 last winter. Making matters worse, some customers on monthly budget plans still owe bills from last year’s exceptionally cold temperatures. They can expect increases of up to 80 percent according to natural gas providers.

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Feeling the Pinch:

Increasing energy costs put added pressure on Minnesota families

Gasoline

Up 83.7 cents per gallon over 2007¹

The cost to an average rural two-car family: \$1,517²; The cost to an average suburban two-car family: \$667³

Natural Gas

Winter bills expected to jump by \$400⁴

Diesel Fuel

Up \$1.26 over 2007⁵; \$4.13 per gallon

Propane Heat

Up 50-percent over last winter⁶

¹ Energy Information Administration, 8/18/8

² Federal Highway Administration, Energy Information Administration

³ Ibid

⁴ St. Cloud Times, 7/19/8

⁵ Energy Information Administration

⁶ WCCO.com, 7/24/8