

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today released the following statement regarding the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) decision to deny a rehearing of its decision to create two "National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors" (NIETCs). In April 2007, the Department of Energy proposed two NIETC designations in the United States, including one in the eastern part of the country that includes 47 counties in New York. The NIETC designation for much of New York threatens to pave the way for the permitting and construction of New York Regional Interconnection's (NYRI) proposal of a nearly 200-mile power line that would cut through dozens of communities and the Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River.

A NIETC designation enables the federal government to overrule local and state objections to proposed power line projects, issue construction permits to energy companies, and grant the use of eminent domain authority, which would allow for the seizure of private property from unwilling owners in order to develop those power lines. Hinchey, who strongly opposed the Energy Policy Act of 2005, is aggressively working in Washington, DC to block any permanent NIETC designations and protect the people of New York and other states from having massive power line projects forced on their communities.

"The Department of Energy's decision to deny a rehearing of its NIETC designations just shows that this entire rehearing process was a charade. The Bush administration cares only about the concerns of energy companies rather than the concerns of the people of New York and residents of other states where these proposed power lines would cut through.

"DOE knew from day one that it was going to plow ahead with its plan to overrule local and state objections, use eminent domain to seize private property, and permit the construction of massive power lines through naturally and historically significant areas. The Department of Energy never cared for one second about how these proposed power lines would affect the quality of life for people, impact home values, and threaten historical and environmentally sensitive areas. For the Bush administration, it's all about helping energy companies grow their profits further. The Department of Energy has gone out of its way to ignore and dismiss genuine public concerns about proposed power line projects like NYRI and that is just plain wrong.

"We are going to continue to fight very aggressively against the Department of Energy and do everything we can in Congress to block these power lines from going up in New York and other parts of the country. The Bush administration and its cronies in the energy industry must be stopped."