

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY GOVERNOR JIM FLORIO
BPU STATE MASTER ENERGY PLAN PRESS CONFERENCE
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1990

RECENT EVENTS IN THE PERSIAN GULF HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT WE NEED TO DO SOME SERIOUS THINKING ABOUT HOW TO KEEP NEW JERSEY'S ENERGY SUPPLY SECURE AND AFFORDABLE.

SUCH IS THE ADVICE IN THE DRAFT OF THE STATE MASTER ENERGY PLAN I'M RECEIVING TODAY. OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS I'M HOPING EVERYONE WHO USES ENERGY -- AND THAT MEANS EVERYONE IN THE STATE FROM THE BIG UTILITIES TO THOUSANDS OF SMALL BUSINESSES AND MILLIONS OF HOMEOWNERS AND RENTERS -- WILL CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS THIS REPORT CONTAINS.

ALREADY HIGHER PRICES ARE MAKING PEOPLE CONCERNED. A BARREL OF OIL COSTS TWICE WHAT IT DID AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SUMMER.

THESE ARE NOT ABSTRACT ISSUES. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SENIOR CITIZENS WORRIED ABOUT WHETHER THEY CAN AFFORD HEATING OIL PRICES ON A FIXED INCOME IN A COLD WINTER. ABOUT WORKING COUPLES HAVING THEIR CAREFULLY-PLANNED WEEKLY BUDGETS BLOWN APART BY HIGHER PRICES AT THE GAS PUMP. IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE HAVING TO BE AT THE MERCY OF EVENTS FAR, FAR AWAY. AND ABOUT WHAT WE ALL CAN DO TO STAND UP FOR OURSELVES.

WE NEED TO CONFRONT THESE PROBLEMS BEFORE THEY BECOME A CRISIS LIKE THE OIL EMBARGO OF THE EARLY 70'S. THAT'S WHEN OUR STATE'S FIRST MASTER ENERGY PLAN WAS PUT TOGETHER IN A MAD RUSH OF 30 DAYS.

WHAT THIS 1990 DRAFT SHOULD MAKE CLEAR IS THAT WE CAN CONFRONT ANY ENERGY PROBLEM. WE HAVE THE KNOW HOW. ALL THAT'S REQUIRED IS A LITTLE AMERICAN INGENUITY ALONG THE LINES OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

AS WE ALL KNOW, FRANKLIN DISCOVERED ELECTRICITY BY FLYING A KITE IN AN ELECTRICAL STORM. AN INTERESTING APPROACH, BUT ONE THAT IS UNLIKELY TO MEET OUR ELECTRICITY NEEDS TODAY.

THAT'S NOT TO SAY FRANKLIN HAS NOTHING TO OFFER WHEN IT COMES TO OUR CURRENT THINKING ABOUT ENERGY. HE ADVISED US THAT "A PENNY SAVED IS A PENNY EARNED." AND TODAY WE'RE RECOGNIZING THE SAME THING APPLIES TO ENERGY.

RATHER THAN FLYING A KITE IN A RAIN STORM, THE NEW AMERICAN INGENUITY MUST RECOGNIZE THAT CONSERVATION IS A SOURCE OF ENERGY IN ITSELF.

THE DRAFT INCLUDES PROPOSALS LIKE DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES AND MAKING THE BEST USE OF OUR CURRENT ONES. THE DRAFT SUGGESTS WE LOOK AT IDEAS LIKE DRIVING CARS POWERED BY NATURAL GAS, WHICH IS PLENTIFUL AND NOT CONTROLLED BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES. OR USING MORE ENERGY FROM THE SUN, WHICH IS FREE, AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE, AND DOESN'T POLLUTE OUR AIR AND WATER.

THE REPORT SAYS WE SHOULD RE-THINK OUR CONSTRUCTION CODES, TO MAKE SURE BUILDINGS ARE AS ENERGY EFFICIENT AS POSSIBLE. AND THAT WE SHOULD OFFER FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO EVERYONE, INCLUDING HOMEOWNERS, WHO SAVE ENERGY.

THERE ARE LOTS OF INTERESTING SUGGESTIONS, FROM RATING THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF NEW HOMES THE SAME WAY WE RATE REFRIGERTORS AIR CONDITIONERS TO ENCOURAGING COMPETITION AMONG UTILITIES TO LOWER PRICES. ALL THE IDEAS MERIT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AS WE DEVELOP THE FINAL DRAFT.

IN THE MEANTIME WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK HARD TO KEEP NEW JERSEY'S ENERGY SUPPLY SECURE. SCOTT WEINER, WHO WILL SPEAK IN A FEW MOMENTS, IS CHAIRING AN ENERGY COMMITTEE OF THE COALITION OF NORTHEASTERN GOVERNORS. AMONG OTHER THINGS THEY ARE CONSIDERING A REGIONAL RESERVE OF HOME HEATING OIL. NEW JERSEY IS LEADING THE WAY ON THIS IMPORTANT REGIONAL ISSUE.

BEFORE I ASK SCOTT TO GIVE YOU MORE DETAILS ON THIS REPORT, I WANT TO SIGN A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THAT THIS IS ENERGY AWARENESS MONTH. EVERYONE NEEDS TO GET INVOLVED AND CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS IN THIS REPORT. MAKE YOUR OPINIONS KNOWN AND LEARN WHAT YOU CAN DO TO LOWER YOUR ENERGY COSTS.