

Eshoo, Democratic Leaders File Brief In Support of California Consumers

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Washington, D.C. -- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, and California's Democratic leaders in Congress and Sacramento announced today that they have jointly filed an amicus brief before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit regarding the inflated prices California citizens and businesses were forced to pay during the 2000-2001 electricity crisis. The brief was filed on Thursday, May 6, 2004.

"FERC has been derelict with its hands-off, blind-eye approach to the gouging of California's consumers in 2000 and 2001," Eshoo said. "Instead of ordering refunds to Californians, FERC has privately settled with companies for pennies on the dollar, with the consumer being forced to pick up the tab. California's Democratic Members of Congress have been a 'truth squad' on this issue for years and it's now time for the Governor and our Republican colleagues to join us in this fight."

The brief was signed by California's U.S. Senators, 33 California members of the U.S. House, the President Pro Tem of the California State Senate, and the Speaker of California's State Assembly. Together these elected officials represent the interests of millions of Californians in Congress and the State Legislature. The vast majority of their constituents suffered significant economic harm during the 2000-2001 electricity crisis as the result of inflated energy prices caused by widespread illegal manipulation of California's energy markets by energy wholesalers and marketers. Those consumers deserve to be heard; but unless the Court grants the requested relief, they will not be permitted.

Specifically, the brief asks the Court to clarify a previous order and direct the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to collect evidence of energy market manipulation in an existing remedy proceeding subject to judicial review. FERC has been adjudicating these issues in non-public proceedings that shut California consumers out of the process.

Amicus Curiae is a Latin term meaning "friend of the court." It is the name for a brief filed those who are not a party to a case but who believe that the court's decision may affect their interest.

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