

Environmental and Energy Study Institute

218 D Street, S.E.

Washington, D.C. 20003

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Contact: Ken Murphy, 546-3200

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY GROUP

AIMS TO REDUCE POLARIZATION, PROMOTE CONSENSUS

WASHINGTON, D. C. - "The new Environmental and Energy Study Institute presents a major opportunity to help restore bipartisan consensus to the national environmental debate," according to the newly elected chairman of the Institute, Congressman Richard L. Ottinger (D-N.Y.).

Ottinger said, "I believe the overwhelming majority of Congress and the general public, Republican and Democrat alike, have been disturbed to see the debate on environmental, energy and natural resources policy turn partisan and divisive. We all want to return to the kind of informed, non-partisan debate that has produced a remarkable degree of consensus on protecting the environment.

"The board of directors of the Institute believe this new public policy group will play a significant role in informing the debate with objective analysis and creative policy options and will help build a new consensus, especially in the U.S. Congress," according to Ottinger.

Institute Vice Chairman Thomas B. Evans said, "The Republican Party has a long and proud history of environmental protection. The environment is not a partisan issue, and the Institute will continue the non-partisan tradition that has characterized the debate since the days of Teddy Roosevelt. The board of directors will be working together to develop and advance good environmental and energy policy."

Ottinger and Evans were elected by the Institute's board of directors (list attached) at their first meeting Sept. 29.

Ottinger was the main founder and first chairman in 1975 of the bipartisan Environmental and Energy Study Conference, the largest legislative service organization in Congress, with more than 85 Senators and 295 Congressmen as

members. Evans was the Conference's Vice Chairman in the 97th Congress while serving as a Republican Member of Congress from Delaware.

Ottinger and other leaders of the Conference worked as catalysts to establish the new Institute.

A 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, non-profit corporation, the Institute is separate and distinct from the Congressional group, but it will work closely with the Conference, building on its reputation, credibility and access to Members of Congress, and will have the Conference's 380 members among its primary clients.

The Institute will work to identify, define and analyze critical issues; develop and evaluate policy options and their pros and cons; promote creative public policy solutions; and serve as a convener, catalyst and consensus-builder.

The Conference's Senate Chairman, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), lauded the election of Ottinger and Evans and the rest of the board, saying they will do an outstanding job for the Institute.

Leahy said the Institute's work will be essential to the Conference's members. The Conference lost a significant part of its budget because of new rules cutting off revenues from the sale of its weekly legislative report outside Congress.

"Besides continuing to provide the weekly report to outside subscribers," Leahy said, "the Institute will be able to take over important legislative research services that the Conference may no longer be able to afford.

"Just as importantly," Leahy said, "the Institute can expand proven public policy services and initiate needed new services, making them available not only to the Conference's members, but also to other government officials, private sector policy makers, the media and the general public."

The Conference's House Chairman, Congressman Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), said the creation of the Institute comes at a crucial time. "Congress more than ever needs objective, non-partisan analysis that cuts through the rhetoric. Otherwise we will see continuing confrontation and stalemate. The Institute, working with the Conference, can provide invaluable assistance to help us move forward with sound environmental and energy policies," Wolpe said.