



For Immediate Release: September 1, 2005

Rep. John Barrow Calls for Federal Investigation into Gas Price Inflation

Georgia Congressman says that "it is the express responsibility of the Federal Trade Commission to protect American consumers from deliberate market manipulation and unfair business practices"

Washington, DC – In response to a growing number of concerns from citizens across Georgia, 12th District Congressman John Barrow (D-GA) today called on the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to immediately launch a full federal investigation into reported instances of unnecessary gas price inflation.

"The government has a responsibility to protect consumers from unnecessary gas price inflation," Barrow said. "There should be zero tolerance for anyone who tries to profit off of fear, rumors, and tragedy. That's why I'm calling on the Federal Trade Commission to launch a full investigation of gas price manipulation. Because if we don't make an effort to figure out why this is happening now, we won't be able to stop it from happening again."

In a letter to FTC Chairwoman Deborah Platt Majoras, Congressman Barrow said that an investigation would identify both the causes and the culprits of rising gas prices in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In addition, the report would provide the FTC and Congress with concrete guidelines to help ensure that future natural disasters or terrorist attacks do not cause similar disturbances in gas prices.

September 1, 2005

Chairwoman Deborah Platt Majoras
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20580

Dear Chairwoman Platt Majoras:

In the last few days, my office has received numerous reports of gas stations throughout Georgia either shutting down or charging consumers inflated fuel prices. Most of the instances appear to be in response to reports that the state was facing a major fuel shortage due to a disruption in the major fuel supply lines serving states along the Atlantic seaboard.

With millions of people across the United States dealing with disruptions in the nation's infrastructure as a result of Hurricane Katrina, I would like to request that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) conduct a thorough investigation into both the reports and specific instances of fuel price gouging throughout the United States in the days and weeks following the hurricane. An investigation of this ongoing situation would produce a careful analysis of the circumstances surrounding the increase in prices, as well as provide concrete recommendations that Congress and the FTC can use to help ensure that future natural disasters and/or terrorist attacks do not cause similar disturbances in gas prices.

While it is the job of the federal government to make sure that the country is prepared to adequately deal with natural disasters, it is the express responsibility of the Federal Trade Commission to protect American consumers from deliberate market manipulation and unfair business practices.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this request, please contact me at 202-225-2823.

Sincerely,
Rep. John Barrow

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Contact: Harper Lawson, (202) 225-2823