

**STATEMENT OF UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM L. "BILL" JENKINS, FIRST DISTRICT, TENNESSEE**

**BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION, AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES CONCERNING H.R. 3380, AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO ISSUE RIGHT OF WAY PERMITS FOR NATURAL GAS PIPELINES WITHIN THE BOUNDARY OF THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK**

**MARCH 19, 2002**

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Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for conducting this hearing on the legislation I introduced, H.R. 3380. This bill will authorize the Secretary of the Interior to issue right of way permits for natural gas pipelines within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Following my testimony you will hear from Matt Ballard, General Manager of the Sevier County Utility District, as well as P. Daniel Smith of the National Park Service explaining the need for this legislative action.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I want to take this opportunity to testify to the economic benefit these pipelines will bring to Sevier County, Tennessee. Sevier County serves as the gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park which drew over 9 million visitors in 2001. It is the crown jewel of the National Park System. Because of the popularity of the Great Smoky Mountains, communities bordering the park have grown substantially and continue to do so. Along with this population growth comes the need for expanded utility service in the area. All parties agree that natural gas serves as a clean, efficient energy source and that construction and maintenance of this pipeline is consistent with good land stewardship policy.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, in closing I am hopeful this bill will move quickly through the legislative process. The Senate has passed companion legislation and awaits House action. I am grateful for the opportunity to appear here today on this important legislation for Sevier County, Tennessee.