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Home > Senate hearing examines winter propane shortages

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## Senate hearing examines winter propane shortages

On May 1, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing to discuss the causes of propane shortages last winter and how to prevent shortages in the future.

Witnesses from the federal government and propane industry agreed that the shortage originally stemmed from an unusually high demand for propane in the fall of 2013 to dry damp corn crops harvested late in the season. This decrease in initial propane supply coupled with a long, very cold winter led to shortages and higher fuel prices that impacted many midwestern and eastern states.

The shortage prompted the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Congress, and the President to take emergency measures to ensure propane deliveries.

The witnesses suggested that changes in seasonal energy use, inadequate pipeline and storage space, and current legislation banning companies from sharing information about propane supplies contributed to the propane shortages. Senators on both sides of the aisle agreed that legislation to help remedy these issues would benefit their constituents and help forestall the necessity of emergency measures in the future.

Sources: E&E News, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

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