

# U.S. Probes Overcharge By Sun Oil

11/73  
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The Federal Energy Office is investigating a complaint that the Sun Oil Co. sold a cargo of heating oil to a Boston distributor for more than three times the market price.

The complaint against Sun Oil Co. was brought by Boston's Northeast Petroleum Co., which said that it paid Sun \$5.9 million last month for 10.1 million gallons of the same heating oil that Sun was selling to its own distributors for \$1.8 million.

Confirming that it had received the complaint, the Federal Energy Office said that Charles Owens, deputy assistant administrator for pricing and taxation, met with Sun Oil officials for 90 minutes last Friday to discuss the price gouging allegation.

"Mr. Owens asked Sun Oil if it could justify its price," said a spokesman for the Federal Energy Office. "At the close of the conversation he had with Sun Oil officials, Mr. Owens announced that the investigation was still ongoing."

Sun Oil declined comment.

One of the largest independent oil dealers on the East Coast, Northeast Petroleum said it had contracted late last November to buy a cargo of home heating oil from Philadelphia-based Sun Oil's wholly owned subsidiary in Puerto Rico, Sun Oil of Puerto Rico. Northeast said the cargo contained 238,000 barrels of heating oil, equivalent to 10.1 million gallons.

Northeast said that Sun Oil's Puerto Rican subsidiary was selling home heating oil to its U.S. distributors for 17 to 18 cents a gallon at the same time that Northeast contracted for its oil.

"Our bill came," a Northeast Petroleum vice president said, "and it was for 58.5 cents a gallon."

The Northeast vice presi-

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