

# President Withdraws His Nomination Of Gibson as Energy Administrator

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President Ford yesterday withdrew the nomination of Andrew E. Gibson as federal energy administrator after Gibson asked him to do so to prevent a lengthy confirmation hearing that would not be in "the best interests of the nation.

The President expressed confidence in Gibson and high regard for his abilities and promised to appoint him to another government post "when appropriate" and after an FBI investigation.

The choice of Gibson as federal energy administrator to succeed John C. Sawhill was announced Oct. 29, but last week it drew criticism after it was disclosed that Gibson, a former maritime administrator and assistant secretary of commerce, had a severance contract with Interstate Oil Transport Co. of Philadelphia that will pay him \$88,000 annually for 10 years.

Gibson said in his letter to the President that the contract was "specific and unconditional" and would not inhibit him "in the discharge of my official responsibilities as federal energy administrator."

Nevertheless, since the nation's energy problems require immediate attention and since it was apparent that the confirmation process would be lengthy, "I request that my name not be transmitted to the Senate," Gibson wrote.

Declaring his confidence that a complete FBI investigation would clear his name of all questions raised, he asked that the investigation go forward.

Mr. Ford replied that it was with the "deepest regret" that he accepted Gibson's request to withdraw his name. But he said the energy problems "are of such a magnitude as to render unacceptable any undue delays in the nomination and confirmation process."

The President promised to

name a new energy administrator "very soon."

He said in his letter to Gibson, "We sought you out because of your proven record as an superior government manager," and he promised to have the FBI investigation completed.

After that, Mr. Ford said, he hopes to appoint Gibson to another post. "We need people in public service of your ability and your experience," the President's letter said.

White House press secretary Ron Nessen said that presidential aide Donald Rumsfeld, who is in overall charge of personnel at the White House, took full responsibility for Gibson's appointment.

However, he said neither Rumsfeld nor the President knew of Gibson's contract

with Interstate when the appointment was announced. Some others in the White House knew of the contract but not the details, Nessen said.

Before his appointment was announced, Gibson gave White House personnel officials an oral report on the contract. Latter, he submitted a written report, Nessen said.

Nevertheless, the President became aware of the contract through news accounts, Nessen said.

"The matter was handled imperfectly in the White House and the matter is now resolved," Nessen said.

In answer to questions about a new energy administrator, Nessen said, "We are diligently looking for a new administrator, but cautiously."