

# **U.S. Sen. Johnson: Joins Sen. Murphy to introduce plan to counter Vladimir Putin's energy influence in Eastern Europe**

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**A contingent of senators led by Democratic Sen. Christopher S. Murphy of Connecticut and Republican Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin is introducing a bill that would authorize as much as \$1 billion in financing for the next few years for energy sector projects in Europe. ... "Russia has shown that it can — and will — coerce nations that are dependent upon its energy. Countering the destabilizing influence that Russia's energy dominance has in the region is important for Europe and U.S. national security interests," said Johnson.**

Niels Lesniewski, Roll Call

<https://www.rollcall.com/news/congress/senator-counter-vladimir-putin-energy-influence-eastern-europe/>

Bipartisan lawmakers are unveiling Thursday the latest Capitol Hill effort to counter Vladimir Putin's energy activities in Eastern Europe.

This time, a contingent of senators led by Democratic Sen. Christopher S. Murphy of Connecticut and Republican Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin is introducing a bill that would authorize as much as \$1 billion in financing for the next few years for energy sector projects in Europe.

That includes natural gas and electricity infrastructure. It is in an effort to counter

Russia's role as a dominant provider of energy in Eastern Europe.

"The Kremlin uses bribery, corruption and scare tactics to coerce countries in Eastern Europe into remaining dependent on Russian energy and oil. America has done a lot to help diversify Europe's energy supply, but we can do a lot more," Murphy said in a statement. "Our bill helps spur public and private sector investment to help our allies secure new sources of energy, and contributes to strategically important projects to help break Putin's grip on Eastern Europe while creating good jobs here in the United States."

A summary of the latest draft legislation was shared first with Roll Call.

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The bill also seeks to encourage the State Department to increase its role as a diplomatic facilitator to foster negotiations for energy projects like pipelines that may need to cross international borders.

Republican Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois and Massachusetts Democratic Rep. Bill Keating are taking the lead on the House version of the legislation, which like the Senate bill would include authorization for the financing through fiscal 2023.

Murphy and Johnson are joined in the Senate effort by several colleagues on the Foreign Relations Committee. Democratic Sens. Benjamin L. Cardin of Maryland and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire are co-sponsors, as are GOP Sens. Marco Rubio of Florida and Cory Gardner of Colorado.

"This bipartisan bill in support of U.S. private sector investment in energy projects in Central and Eastern Europe will not only protect the national and economic security of the United States and our European allies, but will also strengthen our economies and create American and European jobs," Rubio said in a statement.