



NATIONAL FUEL FUNDS NETWORK

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Majority Leader Harry Reid
U.S. Senate

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate

Minority Leader John Boehner
U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Robert Byrd
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

Chairman David Obey
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Tom Harkin
Committee on Labor, Health and Human Services
Education and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate

Dear Congressional Leaders:

By any reasonable standard this has been a brutal winter. Frigid temperatures or massive snowfalls in nearly every section of the country have drastically increased the cost of keeping one's home safe and livable. And the prospect of a hot summer threatens to exacerbate the cost of cooling homes across the country to a safe level.

At a time when many Americans are still reeling from the effects of the current economic recession, home energy bills are causing additional hardships. Not only are those with fixed or low-incomes feeling the pinch of this growing home energy burden, but so to are many middle income families.

The number of households served by the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is projected to reach 8.8 million this year, up by almost 13 percent over last year's record of 7.7 million, according to the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association.

Recently released results of NEADA's Winter Application Survey showed that applications for assistance were up by more than 15 percent in 21 states and more than 25 percent in Mississippi, Washington, Michigan and Nevada. Many reports from the Network's 300 member programs across the US also document the increasing need for home energy assistance.

This increase in requests for assistance is putting unprecedented strain on already limited LIHEAP funds. Historically LIHEAP has served less than one out of five eligible households but despite increased funding millions of qualified Americans are still going without federal energy assistance.

As we begin to move out of winter's grip, the need for help with the home energy bills generated during the winter has not lessened. For this reason, we ask that the Congress immediately provide a supplemental appropriation of \$2.5 billion for the program in FY 2010.

The National Fuel Funds Network supports the current request to appropriators in the House in increase LIHEAP appropriations from the President's request for \$3.3 billion to \$5.1 billion, the FY 2010 level. And we will support any similar efforts in the Senate. But this increase is not enough, given the circumstances described above. Accordingly, the Network asks Congress to approve \$7.6 billion in funding for LIHEAP for FY 2011.

The need is there. People are struggling. No American should have to choose between keeping their home livable or feeding their family. No senior citizen or person with a disability should have to choose between medication or utility bills.

We urge you to move swiftly to address this crisis situation.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Montgomery Corey".

Sue Montgomery Corey
Chairperson, Board of Directors