



National Fuel Funds Network

1010 Vermont Avenue, NW Suite 718

Washington, DC 20005

202 824-0660

202 824-0638 (fax)

info@nationalfuelfunds.org

www.nationalfuelfunds.org

LIHEAP UPDATE

To: NFFN Members

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Senate Appropriations Committee maintains \$2.161 billion for LIHEAP in FY2008

Following the recommendations of a June 19th Senate Labor-HHS-ED Appropriations Subcommittee, the full Senate Appropriations Committee approved the Labor-HHS-ED markup for fiscal year 2008 on June 21st. The committee rejected the President's request of \$1.782 billion and instead provided level funding of \$2.161 billion for LIHEAP for FY 2008, the same level as provided in FY 2007. It is unclear, however, what the regular block grant and the emergency contingency fund split would be.

Increased LIHEAP funding is also getting support in the House. On June 7th, the House Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations Subcommittee marked up a bill that included an increase for FY 2008 LIHEAP funding by \$500 million over FY 2007. As it stands, the bill maintains the regular block grant amount of \$1.98 billion from FY 2007, but increases the emergency contingency funds from \$181.7 million to \$682 million for the next fiscal year.

Overall, the House bill would set LIHEAP funding at \$2.662 billion, a 50% increase over President Bush's budget request of \$1.778 billion. For the entire bill, funding three departments, there is a modest increase of 4.8%, or about \$12 billion, above what the President requested for discretionary programs.

According to various news accounts, the White House has already threatened to veto most of the appropriation bills in the House and Senate, including the Labor/HHS/Education bill. House Republicans, meanwhile, are issuing statements that they have the votes to sustain the veto.

The full House Appropriations Committee will consider the subcommittee bill after the July 4th recess. NFFN will keep you informed on the status of LIHEAP funding.