



National Fuel Funds Network

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Dear Member: President Bush this week is expected to veto legislation containing \$400 million in additional funding for LIHEAP for this fiscal year. The LIHEAP funds are part of the bill providing the funds needed to maintain the war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The President has said he would veto the legislation because it contains timetables for the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq. There is no chance that the President's veto will be overridden in the Congress.

At this time it is unclear what the Congress will do next. It is believed that they will pass another bill to provide funding for the troops but it remains to be seen if the bill will only contain funding for the war effort or whether additional funding will also be added to the bill.

LIHEAP supporters have made strong arguments for additional funding for LIHEAP for this fiscal year. The National Energy Assistance Directors Association reported that 22 states have run out of funds and are no longer accepting applications for energy assistance. (See Reports and Surveys below.)

We will continue to monitor this situation and will report any new developments.

Fuel Fund Actions

- Energy Outreach Colorado is distributing nearly \$1 million in energy assistance funding this week to nearly 100 organizations across the state. The funds will go to several organizations that have run out of funds for energy assistance grants.

Energy Outreach Colorado will contribute \$6.15 million for energy assistance this year with \$1.15 million going to the state Low Income Energy Assistance Program and the remainder going to 99 non-profit organizations in the state.

- Operation Fuel celebrated its 30th anniversary Operation Fuel with a fundraising dinner on April 27 at the Mohegan Sun Hotel. The statewide fuel fund honored the organizations founders, the late Gov. Ella Grasso and the late Father Thomas Lynch of the Archdiocese of Hartford, and took note of the contributions of Gov. M. Jodi Rell, Raymond Necci, president and COO of the Connecticut Light and Power Company and Yankee Gas.

NFFN Board Chair Greg Sawyers wrote to Operation Fuel Board Chairman Ronald J. Walsh to congratulate the organization for its 30 years of service to its community and for its active involvement in the NFFN.

State Government Actions

- In Indiana, Governor Mitch Daniels has signed legislation extending the sales tax exemption on the amount companies spend on home energy assistance. The exemption was set to expire in June but the extension will continue the exemption until July 2009. State senator Tim Lanane, a sponsor of the legislation, said the exemptions would make an additional \$2.45 million available for direct heating or cooling assistance.
- Ohio Governor Ted Strickland has unveiled a web-based computer program system designed to help many of the state's residents apply for a wide range of government programs including energy assistance. According to the governor, low and moderate income Ohioans are missing out on \$1.5 billion in government benefits annually because of exhaustive paperwork, confusing terminology or lone lines.

The Benefit Bank, which now has more than 200 sites state-wide, helps people apply for a variety of assistance programs, file tax returns and register to vote. The system was developed by Solutions for Progress, Inc. and is available in eight states and the District of Columbia. More information about The Benefit Bank is available at www.thebenefitbank.com.

Reports and Surveys

- A total of 22 states and the District of Columbia have stopped taking applications for energy assistance because they have run out of funds, according to Mark Wolfe, executive director of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association. Wolfe said the closing of the programs were the direct result of the reduction in federal funding for LIHEAP.

According to Wolfe, the programs in Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin are no longer accepting

applications for assistance. The complete survey can be found at www.neada.org.

- A study conducted by the Center for American Progress has proposed a strategy for reducing poverty in this country by fifty percent. The study, "From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half," sets out a series of steps designed to reduce poverty.

The steps include raising the minimum wage to half of the annual national wage, expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, guaranteeing child care assistance for low and moderate income parents, and others. More information and the full text of the study can be found at www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/04/poverty_report.html.

- A snap-shot of homelessness in Colorado, captured through a one day survey conducted by the Colorado Interagency Council on Homelessness, found that over half those surveyed said they were homeless because of housing related costs including utility prices.

The survey also determined that 16,203 people were homeless on the night the survey was conducted and children and teens made up one third of the homeless in Colorado. The complete report can be found at www.colorado.gov/cich.