



National Fuel Funds Network

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Dear Member: The Senate is expected to take up the Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bill during the week beginning October 15, according to sources on Capitol Hill. The Senate version of this appropriations bill keeps LIHEAP funding at the FY 2007 level of \$2.161 billion.

At this time it is not clear if there will be any attempts to increase LIHEAP funding when the bill comes to the Senate floor. The House passed version of the appropriations bill contains \$2.662 billion in LIHEAP funding. Once passed by the Senate the bill will go to a conference committee that will work out any differences between the two bills.

President Bush has said he will veto the current versions of the appropriations bill because both exceed the spending limits contained in his proposed budget for FY 2008. It is unclear if Democrats in the House and Senate have enough votes to override the president's veto.

The federal government currently is operating under a continuing resolution that funds the federal government for the next five weeks. The continuing resolution, which expires on November 16, maintains funding for LIHEAP at \$2.16 billion, the same level as FY 2007 funding for the program.

NFFN will continue to monitor the situation and will keep you informed as events progress.

NFFN Actions

- The NFFN Chairman Greg Sawyers has written to each of the nation's governors asking support in a campaign to increase contributions to fuel funds. The **Mobilization for Charitable Energy Assistance** has for the past five years

enlisted the aid of governors to promote charitably funded energy assistance programs.

Over the years, several governors have recorded public service announcements, issued proclamations, held press conferences and taken other steps to increase awareness of the fuel funds in their states.

For more information on the **Mobilization** and ways to can participate please visit our website -

<http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org/mobilizationforcharitableenergyassistance/index.html>

<http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org/mobilizationforcharitableenergyassistance/ToolkitforMobilization.html> .

State Government Actions

- In Connecticut, approval of the state energy plan has been delayed while the legislature attempts to work out problems caused by charges that energy assistance has been provided to illegal immigrants. The state energy plan must be approved before the Department of Social Services can distribute funds for energy assistance.

Following the complaints, State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal ruled that federal law prevents state and community action agencies from knowingly providing illegal immigrants with benefits including energy assistance. The ruling also said that federal law prohibits states from requiring community action agencies to verify whether applicants are citizens.

Blumenthal's ruling has led to a series of hearings in three committees of the legislature. A final vote on the energy plan is expected before the end of the month. Connecticut's energy assistance program usually begins distributing assistance grants on November 1.

Additionally, a group representing over 500 heating oil dealers has withdrawn its support for a program that provides discounted heating oil to low-income households. The Independent Connecticut Petroleum Association (ICPA) claim the program is unfair because the dealers have no way to recoup their costs.

According to the group, the program requires oil dealers to provide oil at 31 cents per gallon above the wholesale price, which won't cover the cost of transportation. Eugene Guilford Jr., executive director of the ICPA, said other heating providers get to recover their costs or are paid market price. Guilford

pointed out that electric utilities build their discounts into their overall rates while propane dealers are paid the full margin cost of the product.

- In Pennsylvania, the legislature went into a special session in September to take up Governor Rendell's energy program. Among the items included in the governor's plan are requirements that utilities in the state install advanced electric meters that measure usage in peak and off-peak hours. These meters would be coupled with "real time" pricing, where customers are charged the actual costs of the electricity at the time they use it instead of paying a flat rate.

The governor has said he believes the "real time" pricing would lead to more energy conservation and efficiency.

Utility Actions

- Puget Sound Energy has received approval to reduce its rates for natural gas by 13 percent. The rate reduction is the first cut in gas rates by the utility in five years. The utility said mild summer temperatures, no major disruptions in supplies, and increased US gas production were the reasons for the reduction.
- Entergy has been conducting a series of summit meetings to discuss issues related to helping the utility's low-income customers. The topics at these meetings ranged from housing and community enrichment to finances, education and crime.

The first summit was held in Choctaw, Mississippi in June and more than 300 individuals came to share ideas on how to help local customers with special needs. The next summit convened in Little Rock, Ark. where noted community activist Dr. Angela Glover Blackwell spoke about issues of race, policy and leadership.

The final summit is scheduled for Baton Rouge, LA on October 19.

Energy Efficiency

- The City of Miami, Office Depot and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development are encouraging the city's residents to save energy by distributing 2,000 compact fluorescent light bulbs as part of a program called "Energy Star Change a Light Day."

Miami Mayor Manny Diaz said "I am asking City of Miami residents to take the "Energy Star Change a Light Day" pledge and with me and to replace at least one incandescent bulb with an Energy Star rated bulb. The 18 seconds it takes to switch to energy-efficient lighting can change everything."