



National Fuel Funds Network

1010 Vermont Ave., NW, #718
Washington, DC 20005
202 824-0638 (fax), 202 824-0660 (phone)

info@nationalfuelfunds.org www.nationalfuelfunds.org

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Dear Member: As we move toward the first day of spring, many areas of the country are still experiencing the cold hand of winter and many households continue to struggle with their home energy costs.

Information from around the country demonstrates how brutal winter weather, the sputtering economy, and continually rising home energy costs have combined to create a dire situation for many Americans.

In Detroit, John X. Miller, chief executive of The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW), said his organization gave out \$1.4 million in heating assistance during January, a record for the agency, and has aided more than 7,000 households so far this winter.

In Delaware, about 13 percent or 35,500 of Delmarva Power's 269,000 residential customers have fallen behind on their payments up from 30,000 this time last year, the utility reported.

In Wisconsin, the number of households receiving assistance through LIHEAP was expected to increase by 35 percent. Tim Bruer, executive director of Energy Services, Inc. which administers Wisconsin's charitable energy assistance program, said service centers are "running at 120 percent capacity..."

The NFFN is currently preparing testimony to be presented to Congress during the appropriations process which will determine the funding level for LIHEAP for the next fiscal year. We need to know what is going on in your programs and your community.

Please, write, call, or email us any information you have that will graphically and vividly illustrate your situation. The information you provide is an essential portion of the presentation that we will make to the Congress.

LIHEAP

- The Senate has approved a budget resolution for FY 2009 that includes \$5.1 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The House has also approved a budget resolution but the funding levels individual programs are not available.

The Senate Budget Committee had originally set funding for the program at \$2.5 billion, the same level as FY 2008, but Senators Arlen Specter and Tom Harkin offered an amendment to bring the funding level up to \$3.5 billion. Following the approval of the Specter-Harkin amendment, Senators Jack Reed and Susan Collins introduced an amendment to take LIHEAP funding up to \$5.1 billion. The Reed-Collins amendment was approved by a voice vote.

President Bush has proposed \$2 billion for LIHEAP for FY 2009.

- A LIHEAP recipient from Hartford, CT told members of the Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families of her struggles to keep her home livable for herself and her two grandchildren during a hearing on rising home heating costs and the importance of LIHEAP.

Robin Hussain was one of several witnesses who provided testimony about the importance of federal energy assistance. Ms. Hussain explained how she had considered moving in with other family members or friends before she received \$675 from LIHEAP.

Dr. Deborah Frank, director of Boston Medical Center's Growth Clinic for Children and one of the authors of "Fuel for Our Future" a study of the impact of energy assistance on children's health and nutrition, also testified at the hearing.

Audio and video transcripts of the March 5 hearing are available through the subcommittee's website at

http://www.help.senate.gov/Hearings/2008_03_05/2008_03_05.html.

Heating Oil

- The Petroleum Marketers Association of America (PMAA) is urging President Bush to release 1.97 million barrels of heating oil from the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve to help consumers in the Northeast cope with record high home heating costs.

In a letter, the PMAA noted that a series of factors "have placed unprecedented pressures on our member dealers and their customers. They are (in) need of immediate market relief and we urge you to come to their aid."

The PMAA also asked the president to “immediately halt shipments of crude oil to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve” in order to “reestablish some sense of market integrity to both crude oil and refined petroleum products.”

- Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell authorized the state’s home heating assistance program to boost payments to the 600 participating heating oil vendors by 4 cents per gallon as a means of off-setting the effects of the volatile international oil market.

Vendors participating in the assistance program are paid at a rate set by the state and Gov. Rell said recent changes in the international market necessitated the increase. The vendors will now receive about \$3.33 per gallon for heating oil.

Congressional Actions

- Alaska Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Ted Stevens have introduced legislation that would allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge if the price of oil reaches \$125 a barrel.

According to Murkowski, 33 percent of the royalties generated from opening the area to drilling would go to the LIHEAP or federal weatherization programs. The rest of the royalties would be divided between the state of Alaska, alternative energy research and the federal food stamp program.

Fuel Fund Actions

- The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) in Michigan raised more than \$1 million in two fundraising radiothons last month. John Miller, chief executive officer at THAW, said the statewide assistance program received \$550,000 in donations during the two day Winter Survival Radiothon in Detroit which would be matched by DTE Energy.

THAW partnered with WWJ newsradio for the fifth year and the event included a rock climbing challenge, a treadmill challenge, an on-line auction and several other features.

A second radiothon was held in conjunction with WTRV-FM in Grand Rapids raised \$18,000, according to Miller. This was the third year for the 21 hour Winter Warmth Radiothon.

- For the third consecutive year, Florida Power & Light Company has donated \$1 million to its FPL Care To Share ® Program. Care To Share is designed to provide emergency assistance funds to customers who are in a crisis situation and unable to pay their electric bill. Since 1993, over 50,000 households in need

have received more than \$10 million in assistance. Care To Share is funded by donations from FPL and its generous customers and employees.