



National Fuel Funds Network

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Member Letter

Dear NFFN Member: Since Congress did not complete action on legislation funding LIHEAP for FY 2006, the program is currently being funded under a continuing resolution, which is scheduled to expire November 18.

Under the terms of the continuing resolution, funding for the program is set at the fiscal year 2005 level of \$1.885 billion with no emergency funds. The House passed version of the Health and Human Services appropriations bill, which includes funding for LIHEAP, called for \$2.006 billion, while the Senate version of the bill set funding at \$1.883 billion in fiscal year 2006.

Meanwhile, pressure to provide additional funding for energy assistance continues to build. A measure to add \$3.1 billion for LIHEAP was defeated on a 50-49 procedural vote requiring 60 votes in the Senate on October 5. Meanwhile, letters signed by members of both houses of Congress have been sent to appropriators requesting additional funds for LIHEAP be included in any supplemental spending bills, and 28 governors signed a letter asking that \$1.276 billion in LIHEAP funding be included in the next hurricane relief legislation. The governors also requested a substantial increase in funding for LIHEAP for fiscal year 2006.

NFFN Mobilization for Charitable Assistance

- NFFN Chairperson Carol Clements has once again written to the nation's governors asking for their assistance in promoting contributions to the charitably funded energy assistance programs in their states. This is the third year of the NFFN's Mobilization for Charitable Assistance.

In her letter, dated September 29, Ms. Clements urged the governors to use the power of their office to encourage the residents of their states to contribute to these energy assistance programs and to help educate the public about available assistance.

Last year four governors responded to our efforts by holding press conferences, participating in public service announcements and issuing proclamations designating energy assistance weeks.

The NFFN has produced a Mobilization tool kit and is urging its members to contact their governors and ask for their support. The tool kit is available at the NFFN's website – www.nationalfuelfunds.org.

State Government Actions

- Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle, in a move to help the state's residents deal with rising energy bills, announced that the state government would provide \$16 million in additional funds for bill payment assistance. According to a statement from the Governor's office, "This funding more than doubles the state's commitment to energy assistance for low-income families."

In addition, We Energies announced that it would give \$11 million and Alliant Energy reported it would give \$1.3 million for energy assistance and energy efficiency programs.

- The Maryland Office of the People's Counsel will conduct a round table discussion October 17 to address the impact of high home energy costs on consumers in central Maryland. The Office of the People's Counsel is the advocate for Maryland's residential utility consumers.
- Gov. Juan N. Babauta of the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands has re-allotted \$5.109 million in fund from the FY 2006 budget year provide additional monies for the CNMI Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program.

The governor said in a letter to DCCA Secretary Juan L. Babauta. "It is painful to me to know that families living paycheck-to-paycheck must pay more for electricity. Therefore, in addition to reprogramming \$5.109 million to the CUC Emergency Fuel Contingency Fund, I hereby express my commitment to reprogram \$150,000 to LIHEAP for fiscal year 2006."

Fuel Fund Actions

- \$1 Energy Fund in Pittsburgh held its opening day for grant applications on October 3. Demand was high, according to the Fund's executive director Cindy Datig. "We awarded as many grants on opening day as we have in all the prior opening days put together," she said. "And this with our average grant being higher than last year's by a third again."

The first grant to a \$1 Energy Fund client was awarded in the name of the National Fuel Funds Network, as part of NFFN's receipt of the Fund's Betty Ann Simon Memorial Award for 2005.

- Roger Rees has been named the new Executive Director of Oregon HEAT. Janice Peltser, president of Oregon HEAT's board of directors, said Rees "has experience creating and leading diverse coalitions across communities, cultures, businesses, non-profit organizations and governments, especially in the area of economic development."

Fire Prevention Week

- October 9th through the 15th is Fire Prevention Week and in Kansas City, MO. the Heart of America Metro Fire Chiefs Council, in conjunction with the Mid America Assistance Coalition (MAAC), is promoting the importance of maintaining utility service as a fire prevention strategy.

In Connecticut, fire department officials were invited to address a meeting of Operation Fuel, the statewide energy assistance program. Pat Wrice, executive director of Operation Fuel, said "fire prevention is extremely important during the heating season. Especially since high home energy costs have people considering alternative means of heating their homes."

The National Fuel Funds Network is NFPA's partner in promoting Fire Prevention Week.

Reports and Studies

- A report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has concluded that funding for LIHEAP should be increased to \$5.2 billion for FY 2006 in order to "protect households currently receiving LIHEAP assistance from paying more for heat this winter."

According to the report entitled "Out In The Cold: How Much LIHEAP Funding Will Be Needed to Protect Beneficiaries from Rising Energy Prices?" heating bills for the average LIHEAP recipient "will increase by at least \$500 this winter unless Congress provides the program with substantially more than the \$2.2 billion in funding it received for fiscal year 2005."

The report includes a state-by-state breakdown of the additional funds that would be needed to protect LIHEAP recipients from having to pay more for home energy this winter.

The complete report is available at the Center's website – www.cbpp.org.