



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: The fight to increase funds for LIHEAP for this winter continues as the Senate is expected next week to consider a bill that would move \$ 1 billion in LIHEAP funding from FY 07 to the current fiscal year.

The legislation was introduced in the Senate last week by Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) and cosponsored by Sens. Coleman (R-MN), Collins (R-ME), DeWine (R-OH), Grassley (R-IA), Smith (R-OR), Thune (R-SD), Santorum (R-PA), Jeffords (I-VT), Sununu (R-NH), Spector (R-PA), Leahy (D-VT), Schumer (D-NY), Kerry (D-MA), Menendez (D-NJ) and Clinton (D-NY). A similar bill, sponsored by Reps. Steven C. LaTourette (R-OH) and Martin T. Meehan (D-MA) has been introduced in the House.

The \$1 billion in funds for LIHEAP in FY 07 was included in the Budget Reconciliation Act and became a target of LIHEAP supporters when negotiations over a proposed \$2 billion supplemental appropriation bill for LIHEAP broke down. The Senate and House return to session on Feb. 27.

The \$1 billion in funding in the Budget Reconciliation Act is divided, with \$250 million in regular program funds and \$750 million in emergency funds. The proposed legislation would stipulate that the funds could not be used for administrative costs.

NFFN will continue to monitor the situation and will report the details as they develop.

Fuel Fund Actions

- The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) conducted its third annual Winter Survival Radiothon in conjunction with radio station WWJ over the weekend and raised about \$300,000 in the Detroit area. THAW also recently conducted a Winter Warmth radiothon in Grand Rapids, which generated about \$32,000. All funds raised through these events will be matched by DTE with bill credits, bringing the totals to about \$664,000.

As part of this fund raising effort, THAW and WWJ Newsradio 950 also staged a five-day online auction, which offered bidders nearly 100 items ranging from vacations in Hawaii and Europe to golf outings and gift baskets.

The 30-hour radiothon was based at the Boll Family YMCA in downtown Detroit and was sponsored in part by Rock Financial, AT&T and the Motorcity Casino. The fund raiser featured several special events including the “Defeat the Cold” treadmill challenge in which people were invited to use treadmills to generate the amount of energy (400 miles) needed to keep a family warm overnight.

In Grand Rapids, THAW’s first Winter Warmth radiothon was conducted on February 10th and 11th in partnership with radio station WTRV The River 100.5 FM. This event was held at the David D. Hunting YMCA and the radio station added several hours of programming that provided information and tips of energy efficiency, weatherization, fire prevention and other topics.

- The Utility Emergency Services Fund has received a \$40,000 grant from the Citizens Bank Foundation to provide emergency assistance to low-income households in Philadelphia. The fund had previously received grants of \$50,000 from the Philadelphia Fund, and \$8,000 each from the MKM Foundation and the Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial Fund.

State Government Actions

- The Michigan Public Service Commission has awarded seven organizations, including The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW), a total of \$25 million in grants to help low-income utility customers pay their home energy bills.

The commission designated \$1.5 million to THAW for its Low Income/Energy Efficiency program and another \$1.5 million to the Salvation Army to provide assistance to households that are ineligible for aid from the state Department of Human Services.

The Michigan Department of Human Services was awarded a total of \$20 million, with \$15 million for State Emergency Relief and Energy Direct program and \$5 million for the Arrearage Payment program.

The Michigan Community Action Agency Association received \$1.3 million for low-income direct energy assistance and \$200,000 to be used to provide a two to one match for funds raised through the Walk for Warmth project.

The Downriver Community Conference and Newaygo County received \$200,000 each and Lighthouse Emergency Services was awarded \$100,000 to provide assistance to households in their service areas.

Utility Actions

- Florida Power and Light (FPL) has donated \$1 million to the FPL Care to Share fund, which provides assistance grants to help needy families, who have experienced a crisis, pay their electric bills.

Care To Share distributes the grants through a network of partnerships, including local government agencies as well as non-profit social service agencies like The Salvation Army. FPL Care To Share has provided emergency assistance to more than 42,000 families since 1994 and distributed, as a result of company and customer contributions, nearly \$7.2 million.

- Through a deal with the Venezuelan government, 2.4 million gallons of home heating oil will be delivered to low income Vermont residents at a 40 percent discount. In addition, 108,000 gallons of heating oil will be provided free to homeless shelters throughout the state.

The deal, which was negotiated by Rep. Bernard Sanders, Joseph Kennedy, who runs the Citizens Energy Corp. and officials at Citgo, a subsidiary of the Venezuelan state-owned oil company. Several other Northeastern states have also worked out arrangements with Citgo to provide discounted heating oil for low-income families.

In a related issue, Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee is looking into the Citgo heating oil program. Rep. Barton has written to Citgo executives asking them to provide all records about the program. Citgo officials have said they will provide the requested documents.