



## *National Fuel Funds Network*

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### **Energy Safety Net Bulletin #90**

Dear Member: As the Congress continues to work to provide additional funding for LIHEAP for this fiscal year, the budget and appropriations process for FY 07 is moving forward.

The NFFN is preparing testimony for the appropriations committees that will illustrate the extent of the gap between the current level of LIHEAP funding and the actual need for assistance. While facts and figures are important to making our point, equally important are stories about real people and the problems they face in dealing with skyrocketing home energy costs.

As a NFFN member, you understand the problem better than we do in Washington. Your organization sees the people and hears their stories. We need those stories for our testimony. Please send us any information that you think will help demonstrate to the members of the appropriations committees the scope of the home energy crisis.

#### **LIHEAP**

- The Senate has passed legislation providing \$1 billion in funding for LIHEAP for the current fiscal year. The bill, which was originally introduced by Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, moves \$1 billion in funding for LIHEAP that was included in the Budget Reconciliation Act from FY 07 to the current fiscal year and divides the monies evenly between regular program funds and contingency funds. The legislation also prevents any of the funds from being used for administrative purposes.

Meanwhile, the House Appropriations Committee has added \$750 million in LIHEAP funding to emergency supplemental appropriations legislation that also contains funds for the war in Iraq and hurricane relief efforts. The House bill takes \$750 million of the \$1 billion in the Budget Reconciliation Act and moves it to the current fiscal year as contingency funds, meaning the money would only become available if released by the President.

- The Republican Study Committee has released a report describing their alternative budget plan in which they call for the complete elimination of LIHEAP. In calling for the elimination of LIHEAP, the report points out that the program

was created as a temporary assistance program that has now become a permanent part of the federal budget and is a responsibility better met by state and local governments. To obtain a copy of the report, contact [info@nationalfuelfunds.org](mailto:info@nationalfuelfunds.org).

### **Utility Actions**

- New Haven, Mayor John DeStefano, Jr. has announced that 4.8 million gallons of home heating oil will be made available for 24,000 low-income Connecticut households, through an agreement with the Venezuelan owned oil company, Citgo.

The city, working in conjunction with the People's Energy Corp., secured the heating oil at a 40 percent discount over the current market price. Citgo also donated 54,000 gallons of heating oil for use in homeless shelters.

Connecticut is the eighth state this winter to receive discounted home heating oil to from Citgo. Other states that have received oil under this program include Massachusetts, Delaware, Maine, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and the Bronx, New York.

The Connecticut Association for Community Action, which represents the network of 12 anti-poverty agencies in the state, is coordinating the certification of eligible applicants for the program.

### **Fuel Fund Activities**

- The Heat And Warmth Fund (THAW) has received a \$50,000 donation from DTE Energy for a program designed to help households, that have relocated to Michigan as a result of the 2005 Gulf hurricanes, pay their gas and electric bills.

Project HERO (Hurricane Emergency Relief Opportunity) will provide short-term assistance to relocated households who may be at risk of losing essential gas or electric service. The program will begin reviewing applications immediately and assistance will be available until all funds contributed by DTE Energy are allocated.

"With this generous donation from DTE Energy, our agencies can provide additional support to people who lost so much due to these natural disasters," said Kathleen Walgren, executive director of THAW. "Being able to maintain their heat and electricity is crucial as people attempt to transition into their new lives and adjust to Michigan's much colder climate."

The Project HERO program will be administered and applicants screened by one of seven designated THAW agencies located in southeastern Michigan,

Muskegon, and Oceana Counties and the greater Grand Rapids area that are participating in this special program.

- Detroit's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Heat the Streets and Walk for Warmth was held on February 25<sup>th</sup> and attracted nearly 900 participants for the 5- and 10-kilometer fund raising event. The event, which is conducted by the City's Department of Human Services, raised a net of over \$50,000. DTE Energy will match the total dollar-for-dollar.

In addition, the MCAAA will also provide funds to the event that could potentially raise the total funds available for energy assistance grants to close to \$170,000, according to race director Stephan Moran.

### **NLIEC Actions**

- The National Low Income Energy Consortium has hired David Fox as its new executive director. Fox has worked with the Campaign for Home Energy Assistance for more than eight years and for the past four years has been its executive director. A former journalist and congressional press secretary, Fox has been a highly visible advocate in the media for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. He is succeeding Sue Present at the NLIEC and will begin his duties there on March 13.