



National Fuel Funds Network

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Dear Member: The National Fuel Funds Network has submitted testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies supporting funding the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) at \$5.1 billion for FY 2007 and seeking forward funding for \$5.1 billion for FY 2008.

In its testimony, the NFFN pointed out that funding for LIHEAP has not kept pace with inflation and has been greatly out distanced by the large increases in fuel costs over the last two years. With LIHEAP funding remaining static, the purchasing power and the effectiveness of LIHEAP grants have been greatly reduced, the NFFN testified.

The complete text of the testimony is available on request and will shortly be posted on the NFFN website – www.nationalfuelfunds.org.

REMINDER

Only eight weeks remain before the start of the NFFN's 22nd Annual Conference at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. The two-day conference begins June 11th and will feature 12 exciting workshops and nearly a dozen hot topic discussions. In addition, New York Times reporter Jason DeParle, author of *American Dream*, the definitive book on welfare reform, will be a featured speaker.

For your convenience the NFFN has set up an Internet link through which you can learn more about the meeting, view a schedule of the events and register for the conference. <http://www.nationalfuelfunds.org/events.html>.

Please also use this site to apply for a Sister Pat Kelley Travel Scholarship (non-members only), nominate a worthy program or individual for three NFFN awards and submit an article for the Silent Auction, conducted at the conference.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Register Now!

State and Local Government Actions

- Lawmakers in Delaware have passed legislation adding \$2 million to the state's low-income energy assistance program. The bill is currently awaiting the signature of Gov. Ruth Ann Minner.
- Commissioners in St. Louis County, MN have approved legislation allocating \$100,000 for energy assistance grants for this year. The funds will be used to provide aid during energy crisis situations. Commissioner Mike Forsman said, "I know a lot of our constituents that are struggling. Some of them are choosing between their maintenance drugs and gas for their cars in order to have heat in their home." More than 10,000 county households are expected to need emergency to pay heating bills or to repair or replace furnaces.

Utility Actions

- We Energies reported that the number of households facing service disconnection have doubled from last year to 150,000. Wisconsin's winter moratorium of utility disconnections ended April 17th. The utility reported that it is sending out between 200 and 300-disconnection notices daily.

To reduce the number of households losing service, We Energies announced that it would suspend disconnections until May 15 for customers who received energy assistance last winter but have not received aid this year and anyone who has made an appointment to apply for aid. Additionally, We Energies is allowing customers to make smaller down payments on overdue bills.

At the start of the heating season, We Energies gave \$11 million for energy assistance and energy efficiency programs to help its customers.

Forums and Conferences

- More than 100 Arkansas lawmakers, regulators, utility officials, aid workers and energy experts met in Little Rock April 18 to discuss energy issues and their impact on low income households. The Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association organized the forum.

Rose Adams, the association's executive director, said more than 79,000 Arkansas households received aid through LIHEAP in 2005 but added that that total represented only 35 percent of the households eligible for the program. Sandra Hochstetter, chairman of the Arkansas Public Service Commission warned, "The middle income is sinking to the low income in this country, largely because of energy issues. I'm convinced we're going to a two-class system."

Reports and Surveys

- “Energy Poverty in Arizona” an analysis of the energy needs of low income households in Arizona commissioned by the National Low Income Energy Consortium’s is now available on the NLIEC’s website -- <http://www.nliec.org/2005%20Conference/ArizonaEnergyPovertyReport.pdf>.

Prepared by the Applied Public Policy Research Institute for Study and Evaluation, a preliminary version of the report was made public last year during the NLIEC’s annual conference in Phoenix.