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July 24, 2009
Energy Safety Net Bulletin #140

The House Appropriations Committee has included \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP in the FY 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill. The bill is on the House floor today. There are no amendments addressing the LIHEAP funding level.

The \$5.1 billion is \$1.9 billion more than President Obama had requested in his budget proposal and is the same amount as was provided for the program in FY 2009. Of the total amount, \$4.509 billion will go for the basic grant and \$590.3 million for contingency funds.

The Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee will mark up its version of the bill Tuesday, July 28. NFFN will continue to monitor the legislation's progress and will keep you informed through Action Alerts and the Energy Safety Net Bulletin.

Fuel Fund Actions

- New Jersey SHARES has received a \$10,000 grant from the PNC Foundation to assist the organization with its public awareness efforts. Jim Jacob, executive director of New Jersey SHARES, said "... it is more important than ever to educate the vulnerable populations on conservation and avoiding choices that could result in tragedy." Jacob said the funds would be used to purchase energy conservation kits to give to New Jersey households who are in need of guidance and assistance with their energy bills.
- Heat-Up St. Louis has presented Sen. Kit Bond (R-MO) with its Founders Award in recognition of his support for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The Founders Award is the organization's highest honor.

Utility Actions

- Piedmont Natural Gas has begun a new fundraising effort for its Share the Warmth program where customers will be able to contribute to the program by rounding up their gas bill to the nearest dollar amount. The difference between the actual bill total and the rounded up amount will go to the Share the Warmth program. The utility kicked off the effort with a

\$100,000 contribution and said it would make another \$50,000 donation if 100,000 customers signed up for the “Round-Up” campaign within 60 days.

The fundraising drive is being conducted in Piedmont’s service areas in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

- In Stillwater, OK, three energy companies and three local restaurants are joining with the Salvation Army to raise funds to provide utility bill assistance to the residents of Payne County. Oklahoma Gas & Electric, Oklahoma Natural Gas and the Public Service Company of Oklahoma have each donated \$1,500 to the program and will match one third of the amount raised by the Salvation Army during the week long campaign.

The Hideaway restaurant, Chick-fil-A, and the Rib Crib BBQ and Grill will each donate 10 percent of their profits during the fundraising week to the Salvation Army.

- AmerenUE has donated \$3 million to fund a program designed to help customers in arrears get a fresh start in managing their utility payments. The program is called “Clean Slate” and it will help qualified customers pay off their past due utility bills. Qualified participants in the program, who have active accounts with the utility, will have to pay 10 percent of the delinquent amount in order to receive a “Clean Slate pledge” that will cover the rest of the outstanding balance. Inactive qualified customers will be required to pay 20 percent of the entire balance on the account.

State Government Actions

- Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn has signed legislation that caps gas and electric bills for certain low income customers, seniors and others on fixed incomes at six percent of a household’s income. The bill also sets up a payment plan so that those customers who fall behind on their utility bills can avoid disconnection.

- Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell announced that she was directing \$14 million in extra federal energy assistance funds to thousands of low and moderate income households. One million dollars would be used to repair or replace faulty furnaces, the governor said.

Correction

- In Energy Safety Net Bulletin #139, the web address for the Drive Smarter Challenge was listed incorrectly. The correct web address is <<http://www.drivesmarterchallenge.org>> .

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