



National Fuel Funds Network

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Dear member: The Senate has provided for \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP in its version of a \$3 trillion budget resolution. The House passed version of the FY 2010 budget resolution contained \$3.2 billion for LIHEAP. House and Senate conferees will meet after Easter to work out a compromise version of the resolution.

The \$5.1 billion in LIHEAP funding was added to the Senate version of the resolution through an amendment sponsored by Senators Jack Reed (D-RI) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME). The amendment was approved on the Senate floor by a voice vote.

The budget resolution is non-binding so House and Senate appropriators are free to determine the funding level for the program on their own. As the appropriations process moves forward, the NFFN and other LIHEAP supports will work to convince the members of the appropriations committees of the need for funding to be set a \$5.1 billion.

This is where you, our members, become even more important. The information you can supply us about the demand for energy assistance and the number of households facing utility cut-offs will go a long way in helping us make the case for increasing the level of LIHEAP funding over the President's recommendation.

You also can help by letting your representatives and senators know LIHEAP funding must not drop below \$5.1 billion for FY 2010.

Fuel Fund Actions

- The Nebraska Energy Assistance Network held a one-day Energy Affordability Symposium, which featured former NFFN Board Member Roger Colton of Fisher, Sheehan and Colton and David Carroll of APPRISE as keynote speakers.

The symposium attracted energy assistance community workers from across the state who came to Omaha to share ideas and information about dealing with the challenges facing residents of the state.

Colton, whose firm publishes the annual "Home Energy Affordability Gap" report, discussed the difference between available energy assistance and the actual need for assistance.

The other keynote speaker, David Carroll, who has more than two decades of experience developing research on the energy needs of low-income households and conducting evaluations of programs to meet those needs, talked about integrated solutions to energy affordability problems.

- Alliant Energy's Hometown Care Energy Fund has received a \$500,000 donation from Wisconsin Power and Light. The Hometown Care Energy Fund provides aid to utility customers who need additional assistance over and above the help provided through LIHEAP.

Utility Actions

- Columbia Gas of Maryland won approval from the state's Public Service Commission to dedicate \$60,000 to help low income customers through its fuel fund. The funds come from monies the utility receives from its federally regulated natural gas transporter.

In addition, Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania has received permission to use \$572,000 for its fuel fund. Columbia Gas representatives said the funds would benefit as many as 1,700 customers in Pennsylvania.

- Puget Sound Energy has donated \$50,000 to the Salvation Army Warm Home Fund to provide energy assistance to customers dealing with utility bills generated during the winter.

Congressional Actions

- The House Committee of Energy and Commerce has released a draft version of legislation designed to end the nation's dependence on foreign oil and reduce global warming. The draft was released by Committee Chairman Henry Waxman and Energy and Environment Subcommittee Chairman Edward Markey.

The draft deals with many aspects of clean energy production and energy efficiency but contains no details on consumer assistance. The discussion draft only notes "a consumer assistance section remains to be provided."

Rep. Waxman said the committee is expected to complete action on the bill by Memorial Day. Subcommittee hearings are scheduled to begin April 20 with the subcommittee mark-up beginning April 27 and the full committee mark-up beginning May 11.

The draft legislation and accompanying discussion draft summary are available at http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press_111/20090331/acesa_discussiondraft.pdf and http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press_111/20090331/acesa_summary.pdf.

Publications

- Project Energy Savers has two new publications available. *The Adventures of Sparky, Energy Saving Squirrel* is a children's activity book that includes dot-to-dot, mazes and coloring pages, each with energy savings tips for the family home. *Your Home Energy Savers Book* is a 96-page illustrated handbook, which provides information about how to save energy.

More information about these publications and others from Project Energy Savers can be found at www.projectenergysavers.com.