

The CONEG governors were joined by eight other governors in this LIHEAP letter to House and Senate appropriations leadership.

November 10, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Dicks:

We write to express our deep concern that thousands of vulnerable low-income households in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, and across the country will begin this winter facing both high home energy prices and a deep reduction in Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) home heating assistance. We urge you to support \$4.7 billion for LIHEAP in FY2012, the same funding as last year.

In advance of legislation providing FY2012 funding, we also ask that you require the Department of Health and Human Services to distribute LIHEAP allocations to states based on the \$3.4 billion regular program funding level recommended by both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for FY2012. By requiring the Department to distribute regular program funding in any future Continuing Resolution (CR) at an assumed level of \$3.4 billion, an additional \$1.4 billion in baseline funding will be available to calculate each state's funding level compared to the current CR. Time is of the essence. Winter has already begun in our states, and distributing meaningful benefit levels to households in need is critically important.

We appreciate the efforts of the House and Senate on LIHEAP funding levels to date, but urge you to consider including additional resources as you prepare to finalize the FY2012 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education spending bill. We ask that you to work to provide \$4.7 billion, the same funding as last year.

Ensuring adequate LIHEAP resources is particularly pressing this winter. The Energy Information Administration (EIA) projects that households that use delivered fuels, such as home heating oil and propane, can expect to pay almost 10 percent more this year to heat their homes. EIA is already reporting retail prices for residential heating oil and propane fuels in the Midwest, Northeast, and Mid-Atlantic that are respectively roughly 27 percent and 15 percent higher than fall 2010.

As the heating season begins, home energy prices remain high. We request your timely action to ensure LIHEAP funding in this fiscal year will allow states to provide meaningful assistance to vulnerable households struggling with home energy bills.

Sincerely,



Governor Deval Patrick
Massachusetts



Governor Peter Shumlin
Vermont



Governor Martin O'Malley
Maryland



Governor Paul LePage
Maine



Governor John Hickenlooper
Colorado



Governor Dan Malloy
Connecticut



Governor Jack Markell
Delaware



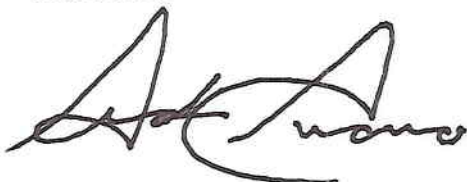
Governor Pat Quinn
Illinois



Governor Mark Dayton
Minnesota



Governor John Lynch
New Hampshire



Governor Andrew Cuomo
New York



Governor Bev Perdue
North Carolina



Governor Lincoln Chafee
Rhode Island



Governor John deJongh, Jr.
Virgin Islands



Governor Earl Ray Tomblin
West Virginia

Cc: Senate Labor, Health and Humans Services, and Education Subcommittee Chairman Tom Harkin
Senate Labor, Health and Humans Services, and Education Subcommittee Ranking Member Richard Shelby
House Labor, Health and Humans Services, and Education Subcommittee Chairman Denny Rehberg
House Labor, Health and Humans Services, and Education Subcommittee Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro