

January 29, 2008

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
United States Senate  
322 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sanders,

The Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) applauds your efforts to add \$800 million, provided equally as regular program and contingency funding, as emergency FY2008 funds to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This increase in LIHEAP funding will provide vital assistance to the nation's vulnerable, low income households faced with unaffordable home energy bills.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration's (EIA) latest forecast paints a grim picture for the region's low-income citizens. According to EIA, households heating with home heating fuel can expect to pay \$1,955 this year, or 33 percent more than last year. Low-income households spend as much as 14 percent of their annual income on home energy, compared to 3.6 percent for all other households. For many of these low-income households, the basic need of home energy has become simply unaffordable.

While demand for this highly effective program continues to rise, increases in the price of home heating fuels have caused the purchasing power of the LIHEAP dollar to plummet, defraying only a modest amount of a low-income household's total heating bill. In some cases, the average LIHEAP benefit is not enough to pay for the minimum delivery of home heating oil or kerosene.

The Governors commend your timely efforts for an additional \$800 million in LIHEAP regular and contingency funding to help states across the country make the basic need of home energy more accessible to their most vulnerable citizens.

Regards,

/o.s./  
Jon S. Corzine  
Outgoing Chair  
Governor of New Jersey

/o.s./  
Jim Douglas  
Chair-Elect  
Governor of Vermont

/o.s./  
John Lynch  
Lead Governor for LIHEAP  
Governor of New Hampshire