

August 27, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) welcomes your continuing support of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the invaluable assistance it provides to millions of the nation's most vulnerable low-income households. As extreme weather continues in the Northeast and across the nation, LIHEAP funds are needed to provide relief for low-income families facing unseasonably hot weather. In addition, LIHEAP households in the Northeast must also prepare for the rapidly approaching heating season. Therefore, we urge you to release the remaining \$100 million in FY2010 LIHEAP contingency funds in a timely manner to ensure that these funds can provide meaningful assistance to low-income residents faced with burdensome home energy bills.

In the current economic and weather situation, LIHEAP is more essential than ever in providing a critical lifeline to those vulnerable households struggling to pay home energy bills. It is a vital safety net for those who, with limited financial resources, have little ability to deal with seasonal and unexpected increases in home energy costs. Low-income households in the Northeast face some of the highest energy prices in the nation, regardless of fuel, according to the recent Short-Term Energy Outlook prepared by the Energy Information Administration. Slightly over 40 percent of the LIHEAP households in our states have total annual energy costs of \$2,000, and 70 percent of these households have incomes of \$20,000 or less. As a result, our states are seeing increased requests for LIHEAP and the considerable relief it can offer to these households.

The Governors urge you to release the remaining \$100 million in FY2010 LIHEAP contingency funds to help our states assist these vulnerable households. We also urge you to maintain a strong federal commitment to low-income home energy assistance.

Sincerely,

/o.s./
Donald L. Carcieri
Governor of Rhode Island
CONEG Chair

/o.s./
John H. Lynch
Governor of New Hampshire
CONEG Vice-Chair