

***LIHEAP Letter to House and Senate Appropriators and Leadership***

September 20, 2010

Hon. Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. John Boehner  
Minority Leader  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Daniel Inouye  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Thad Cochran  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. David Obey  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

As you prepare to fund the government into FY2011, we wish to bring to your attention a potentially catastrophic situation involving the operation of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and to urge that the Congress adopt the FY2011 recommendations of the House appropriators for LIHEAP. The House bill would level funding of LIHEAP at \$5.1 billion for FY2011, the same amount as provided in FY2010. In comparison, the Senate bill would provide \$3.3 billion, requiring a cut of three million households from the program. In order to pay their energy bills, many of these families would have to choose between paying for food, medicine and other necessities. The House bill would prevent many of these families from having to make these choices.

The Senate bill is premised upon an automatic “trigger” provision proposed by the Administration. If that trigger is eventually enacted, LIHEAP would be funded at \$5.3 billion next year; however, this provision cannot take effect without signing new authorizing legislation into law—therefore, the “missing” \$2 billion represents an unexpected, inadvertent cut to a critical program. At this time, the requisite “trigger” legislation has not been introduced in either the House or the Senate. It is thus unlikely that this Congress has time to legislate on this matter. If the next Congress opts to address this issue, it may not occur until long after the winter heating season.

LIHEAP has evolved into a widely supported, essential program that delivers critical short-term aid to our most vulnerable neighbors, including elderly on fixed incomes and the desperately poor. In the last two fiscal years, the LIHEAP program was funded at the \$5.1 billion level. This strong bipartisan funding commitment allowed LIHEAP to grow from a primarily regional program to a national one.

The number of households receiving assistance reached record levels for this year, increasing from 7.7 million to 8.8 million. Even though Congress funded LIHEAP at the \$5.1 billion level, that amount was still only enough to assist one in five eligible Americans.

At this writing, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education has provided \$5.1 billion for FY2011. The Senate Appropriations Committee has provided \$3.3 billion for LIHEAP. Thus, unless conferees adopt the \$5.1 billion in LIHEAP funding envisioned by House appropriators for next year, states will be compelled to implement painful, 35 percent reductions in less than three weeks. More than 3 million very low income otherwise-eligible households (or nearly 8 million Americans) could soon lose access to LIHEAP. Fortunately, this catastrophe can be averted by at least level-funding LIHEAP as House appropriators have proposed. We respectfully suggest that this remedy be applied to appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

A New Leaf's Mesa Community Action Network  
AGL Resources  
Alliant Energy Corp  
Ameren Services  
American Corn Growers Association  
American Gas Association  
American Public Gas Association  
American Public Power Association  
Arizona Community Action Association  
Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association, Inc.  
Atlantic City Electric  
Avista Corp  
California/Nevada Community Action Partnership  
Campaign for Home Energy Assistance  
Clearwater Gas System  
Cleco Corporation  
CMS Energy  
Coalition for Affordable Energy for All  
Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm  
Coconino County Community Services, Community Action Agency  
Columbia Gas of Kentucky  
Columbia Gas of Maryland  
Columbia Gas of Massachusetts  
Columbia Gas of Ohio  
Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania  
Columbia Gas of Virginia  
Community Action Human Resources Agency  
Community Action Partnership of Oregon  
Con Edison  
Connecticut Association for Community Action  
Constellation Energy  
Consumer Action of California  
Delmarva Power  
DTE Energy  
Duke Energy  
Edison Electric Institute  
Energen  
Entergy  
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund  
FirstEnergy  
Florida Association for Community Action (FACA), Inc.  
The Florida Council on Aging  
Florida Power & Light Company  
Hawaiian Electric  
The Heat and Warmth Fund  
Integrus Energy Group  
Iowa Community Action Association  
Kansas City Power and Light  
Louisiana Association of Community Action Partnership  
Maricopa County Board of Supervisors  
Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.  
Michigan Electric and Gas Association  
MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company

Minnesota Community Action Partnership  
National Association of State Energy Officials  
National Caucus and Center on Black Aged  
National Community Action Foundation  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
National Consumers League  
National Energy Assistance Directors' Association  
National Fuel Funds Network  
National Fuel Gas Company  
National Grange  
National Grid  
National Hispanic Environmental Council  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
New Jersey Natural Gas  
New York State Community Action Association, Inc.  
Nicor Gas  
NIPSCO  
Northeast Utilities System  
NorthWestern  
NW Natural  
Pepco  
Peoples Natural Gas Co.  
PG&E  
Piedmont Natural Gas  
Portland General Electric  
PPL  
Prosperity Works  
PSEG  
Puget Sound Energy  
RetireSafe  
Salvation Army  
San Diego Gas & Electric  
SEMCO Energy  
South Eastern Arizona Community Action Program  
Southern California Gas Company  
Southern Company  
Southwest Gas Corporation  
TXU Energy  
Vectren  
Vermont Gas  
Washington Gas  
Washington State Community Action Partnership  
Western Arizona Council of Governments  
Weststar Energy  
Wisconsin Energy Corporation  
World Institute on Disability  
Tucson Electric Power  
Xcel