

National Energy Assistance Directors' Association
1232 31st Street NW
Washington, DC 20007
202-237-5199

April 2, 2013

Rep. Rosa DeLauro
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. DeLauro:

On behalf of the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA), we are writing to request your support for providing \$5.1 billion in funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for FY 2014. This would restore funding to the FY 2010 funding level of \$5.1 billion and allow states to return benefit levels to approximately 50 percent of the cost of home heating and cooling for some of the nation's poorest households.

In addition, we are concerned that states will be hampered in their ability to administer their programs efficiently due to the lack of advanced funding. The lack of a final program appropriation prior to the beginning of the fiscal year creates significant administrative problems for states in setting their program eligibility guidelines. In order to address this concern, we are requesting advance appropriations of \$5.1 billion for FY 2015.

Program funding cuts since FY 2010 have reduced the number of households served, from about 8.1 million in FY 2010 to about 6.9 million in FY 2012. Average benefits declined from \$513 in FY 2010 to \$405 in FY 2012, and the average cost of home heating was reduced from 51.8 percent in FY 2010 to 46 percent in FY 2012. For FY 2013, we are estimating that average benefits will drop even further, to 39.5 percent of the cost of home heating. This is largely a result of the sequester-induced cuts, as well as the higher cost of home heating this winter due to colder-than-usual temperatures in many parts of the country.

LIHEAP households are among the most vulnerable in the country:

- 40 percent have someone age 60 or older in the home
- 72 percent have a family member with a serious medical condition
- 26 percent use medical equipment that requires electricity
- 37 percent went without medical or dental care
- 34 percent did not fill a prescription or took less than their full dose of prescribed medication
- 19 percent became sick because the home was too cold
- 85 percent of people with a medical condition are seniors

LIHEAP's impact in many cases goes beyond providing bill payment assistance. By playing a crucial role in maintaining family stability, LIHEAP enables elderly citizens to live independently and ensures that young children have safe, warm homes to live in. Although the circumstances that lead each client to seek LIHEAP assistance are different, LIHEAP links these stories by enabling people to cope with difficult circumstances with dignity.

Households of all varieties receive LIHEAP assistance. However, the positive impact on the most vulnerable members of society, including the elderly, disabled, and very young children, is striking. LIHEAP agencies in every state have continued to receive new requests for assistance from families struggling in the most difficult economy we have seen in decades. In many places, LIHEAP is administered by Community Action Agencies with deep ties to the people they serve. Through their knowledge and connection to their communities, they are able to assist people in need at multiple levels, creating backward and forward linkages that enable people to regain their footing and start fresh.

The members of NEADA recognize the difficult budget decisions that you face as you consider funding levels for LIHEAP for FY 2014 and advance funding for FY 2015. We appreciate your interest and continued support for LIHEAP. Please feel free to call upon us if we can provide you with additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Wolfe".

Mark Wolfe
Executive Director