



NATIONAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

September 4, 2019

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the state directors of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), I am writing to request that the Committee provide \$3.8 billion in LIHEAP funding for FY 2020, the same level of funding provided in the House version of the FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. State programs would use these funds to help an additional 300,000 poor families pay their heating and cooling bills next year.

LIHEAP funding is essential because the cost of home heating and cooling is becoming even more unaffordable for millions of low-income households. The average cost of home heating increased to \$918 last winter from \$761 during the winter of 2015-16.<sup>1</sup> While LIHEAP makes an important difference for the families it serves, funding is only sufficient to help one out of five eligible households.

Energy prices fall hardest on lower income households. In FY 2017, the average energy burden for low-income households was 17.2 percent of income, more than five times more than the rate for non-low income households (3.0 percent). Even with LIHEAP assistance, poor families struggle to pay their home energy bills. In a survey of LIHEAP recipients sponsored last year by NEADA, 36 percent of respondents reported going without food for at least a day, 41 percent went without medical or dental care, and 31 percent did not fill a prescription or took less than a

---

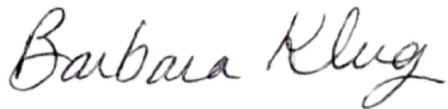
<sup>1</sup> November 2017 Short Term Energy Outlook, Energy Information Administration. Average price increase represents a weighted average of EIA projected prices.

prescribed dose to stretch their supply. These responses underline the agonizing choices faced by low-income households that struggle to pay their utility bills.

LIHEAP's impact in many cases goes beyond providing bill payment assistance by playing a crucial role in maintaining family stability and improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations. It 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.

I appreciate your consideration of NEADA's request to match the House Appropriations LIHEAP funding level to help some of the nation's poorest households afford their home heating and cooling bills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Klug". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Barbara Klug  
Chair