NATIONAL ENERGY ASSISTANCE DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

July 23, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro

On behalf of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA), which represents the state directors of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), I am writing to request that Congress include an anomaly in the FY 2027 Continuing Resolution to provide additional LIHEAP funding if home heating oil prices remain elevated during the coming winter.

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East has created significant uncertainty in global petroleum markets. If crude oil prices remain near their current level of approximately $100 per barrel, about $28 higher than before the conflict began, the average cost of heating with oil could increase from approximately $1,100 last winter to about $1,700 this coming winter.

Congress cannot control world energy markets. It can, however, ensure that states have the resources to respond if home heating oil prices remain elevated or increase further during the heating season. That is precisely why LIHEAP exists.

In addition, electricity prices have been rising rapidly as utilities invest in new generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure to meet growing electricity demand, including demand from data centers. National residential electricity prices increased by approximately 7.6 percent between January and April 2026, according to the latest federal data, following a 13 percent increase between 2023 and 2025. These higher electric bills are leaving millions of households with less income available to pay for other essential energy needs, including home heating this winter.

We estimate that state LIHEAP programs will require approximately $3.0 billion in additional funding to address higher home heating oil and electricity costs this winter. This is $1.0 billion more than we requested in our FY 2027 testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies.

Since that testimony, crude oil prices have risen from approximately $72 per barrel before the conflict in the Middle East to about $100 per barrel, significantly increasing expected home heating oil costs for the coming winter. At the same time, electricity prices continue to rise as utilities make major investments in new generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure. These funds would support households already receiving LIHEAP assistance while also helping

The need for preparedness is reinforced by the nation's growing energy affordability crisis. According to the latest federal data, electric utilities disconnected service to more than 13 million households for nonpayment in 2024. Utility arrearages remain above $25 billion, and millions of households will enter the winter heating season already carrying unpaid electric bills from the summer cooling season. For many families living paycheck to paycheck, even a modest increase in heating costs will force difficult choices between paying for heat and meeting other basic household expenses.

LIHEAP was created to help states respond to exactly these circumstances. Providing sufficient funding before winter begins to address higher home heating oil prices will allow states to plan effectively, target assistance to the households at greatest risk, and respond quickly if energy prices remain elevated or increase further during the heating season. Waiting until families are forced to cut back on food, medicine, or other basic necessities in order to pay their home heating oil bills is both more disruptive and more expensive.

We respectfully urge Congress to include a LIHEAP funding anomaly in the FY 2027 Continuing Resolution. The risks are already apparent. Taking prudent action now will ensure that states are prepared to protect vulnerable households if high heating fuel prices persist throughout the coming winter.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support of LIHEAP.

Sincerely,

Mark Wolfe

Mark Wolfe
Executive Director
National Energy Assistance Directors Association