

September 10, 2014

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-305 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515-6015

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6157

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6157

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6157

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As Congress prepares to take up a continuing resolution (CR) for the start of the 2015 fiscal year, the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) urges you to ensure that the maximum funding level be provided for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) within the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. Specifically, we ask Congress to maintain current language from the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-76) pertaining to the allocation of LIHEAP funds to the states. We also urge Congress to ensure that under the CR the full year LIHEAP appropriation can be promptly released to the states. Such a provision can provide the needed certainty that LIHEAP funds will be available to low-income households when the heating season begins in a few short weeks.

The LIHEAP program has unique funding needs under a CR since almost all LIHEAP funding is obligated in the first quarter of the fiscal year to meet immediate heating needs in the nation's cold-weather regions. Without the option for contingency funding, the LIHEAP programs in our states need the maximum funding level to provide meaningful assistance to low-income households struggling to afford the basic necessity of home energy.

The CONEG governors deeply appreciate your longstanding support of LIHEAP. We recognize the formidable challenges of the appropriations process and the difficult fiscal decisions facing Congress this year. However, the uncertainty regarding the funding level and the timing of the release of LIHEAP funds under a CR prevents states from finalizing benefit levels or payments

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to utilities, vendors or oil dealers. The assurance that maximum LIHEAP funding will be released early in the heating season is critical for our states. For low-income households, receiving the LIHEAP benefit at the beginning of the heating season means the delivery of essential home heating oil or restoration of vital gas or electric utility service before winter weather turns deadly.

For Northeast states, the certainty of receiving the maximum amount of LIHEAP funding without delay is critically important to ensure that benefits can be quickly provided to those households with the most immediate needs.

Sincerely,

/o.s./
Margaret Wood Hassan
Governor of New Hampshire
CONEG Chair

/o.s./
Dannel P. Malloy
Governor of Connecticut
CONEG Vice-Chair

/o.s./
Peter Shumlin
Governor of Vermont
CONEG Lead
Governor for LIHEAP

Identical letters were also sent to Senate Appropriations Leadership including the Senate Subcommittee on Labor, HHS.