

NEW ENGLAND DELEGATION ASKS PELOSI TO TRIPLE FUNDING FOR HOME HEATING AID

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Washington, DC -- It may be warm outside, but members of the New England Congressional Delegation are already thinking about the dead of winter. Twenty members sent a letter to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi today, urging her to increase to \$9 billion for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in a second economic recovery package. To ease the burden of rising heating costs and expand eligibility for the program, the delegation believes it will be necessary to more than triple current funding. They are also requesting \$1 billion for Weatherization Assistance.

With the price of home heating oil over \$4.00 a barrel, many households in New England will be paying upwards of \$4,000 to heat their homes this winter. These high prices will severely stretch the budgets of even middle class families.

“Last winter, I heard stories of elderly women turning over their entire social security checks to pay for their home heating oil. With conditions expected to get worse this winter, I can hardly imagine the impact on our communities,” said Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01), Vice Chair of the Democratic Caucus.

More than 6 million New England households rely on oil to heat their homes. And, the volatility in the oil market does not bode well for them.

Congressman John Olver (MA-01)

said, "Between high gas prices and the near doubling in the price of home heating oil, this winter is shaping up to be a perfect storm for residents of Massachusetts. This historical investment in LIHEAP and the Weatherization Assistance Program is warranted, if not a moral obligation, to avoid a societal disaster."

"Keeping your home heated in New Hampshire is not a matter of convenience or comfort but a matter of survival. Congress must take action now to prevent a regional crisis this winter where thousands will be faced with a horrible choice of feeding their children or keeping them warm and healthy," Congressman Paul Hodes (NH-02) said.

President Bush needs to start standing up for the American people," said Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter (NH-01). "Thousands of families across New England will be unable to heat their homes this winter because of cuts the Bush administration has made to LIHEAP. I urge Speaker Pelosi to provide this emergency funding so families do not have to choose between putting food on the table and staying warm."

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