

National Energy Assistance Directors' Association
Suite 900/1615 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

December 27, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

On behalf the members of the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA), I am writing to urge you to immediately release \$590.3 million in emergency contingency funds for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). These funds will be used to address the need for additional assistance as a result of continued high prices for natural gas and electricity, as well as help poor families pay the high cost of electricity to cool their homes this summer.

The additional funds will be especially important for families using heating oil in the Northeast, as well as propane in other parts of the country. The cost of home heating with these fuels is reaching record levels, pricing access to affordable energy out of the reach of millions of low income families. The US Energy Information Administration's (EIA) Short Term Outlook is projecting record heating oil and propane prices this winter. According to the report, in comparison to last winter, the cost to heat a home with home heating oil will increase from \$375 to \$1,841, propane by \$273 to \$1,622, and natural gas by \$87 to \$900.

Recent surveys have found that when poor families do not have enough money to pay their home energy bill, they cut back on purchases of food, rent, medicines and other essential items. Many families that receive energy assistance also suffer from chronic illnesses and do not have the funds to pay for the increase in home energy prices.

The release of the \$590.3 million in emergency funds will allow states to provide additional benefits to poor families to pay the rising cost of home heating fuels. The funds will also allow states to reach out to the elderly and disabled who will receive an average increase of only \$24 a month in their Social Security payments in 2008 – far less than they will need to pay the increase in their home heating and cooling costs.

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Wolfe". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Mark Wolfe
Executive Director