

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

As you continue to help Americans cope with the consequences of the public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic, we'd like to bring your attention to the dire and urgent need for energy assistance. We respectfully request that you provide at least \$4.3 billion in supplemental funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to assist households suffering from the economic effects of COVID-19. Now more than ever, it is critical to provide a safety net for our most vulnerable American families. In addition, we are requesting that the state administrative cap be raised to 15 percent to allow states to ramp up their application process and make modifications to the systems to increase outreach to the newly unemployed.

We appreciate the \$900 million included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for LIHEAP. The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association (NEADA) estimates that this amount will help approximately 1.5 million households currently receiving LIHEAP and 1.5 million recently unemployed. However, in a typical year, LIHEAP serves only one out of six eligible households. With more than 30 million Americans filing for unemployment in the last six weeks, it is clear this funding will only scratch the surface of what families will need to stay afloat. The resulting increase in the low income population has increased the number of eligible households by 8.5 million from 35.2 million to 43.8 million.

While there are current moratoria in effect preventing disconnect notices for energy utilities, our state directors and utility programs are reporting skyrocketing requests for assistance. For example, one utility reported that non-payment of utility bills has increased from approximately 1% to 24% in the past month. In some states, utility assistance is the number two request behind rent assistance and one program reported 200-300 walk-ins and phone calls daily, more than double the typical requests for utility assistance at this time of year. When shutoff moratoria are lifted, the need for utility assistance will reflect the need documented in unemployment applications.

According to NEADA, state directors would use the additional \$4.3 billion in funds to serve approximately 11 million households. 50 percent of the funding would help newly laid off workers, 25 percent would help low-income families who were already struggling and for whom the pandemic will only make things worse, and the remaining 25 percent will go towards the purchase of air conditioning units for the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions who are required to shelter-in-place.

States have also reported that they are ready to move funds quickly. Despite the challenges of switching from in-person applications to telephone or mail, states are making the necessary changes to keep their programs open and continue providing service to families in need.

NEADA's estimate of need assumes an average grant of \$325 to cover home energy costs for four months, plus \$300 to provide window or room air conditioners for elderly and medically vulnerable households to ensure their houses stay a safe temperature while they are sheltering in place.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of our request. While the initial \$900 million will bridge the gap, giving states the ability to keep programs running, staff employed, and customers served, it is insufficient to meet the rapidly growing need for assistance. We look forward to working with you to develop a more comprehensive solution that includes increased funding for LIHEAP.

Sincerely,



PETER WELCH
Member of Congress



PETER T. KING
Member of Congress



JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, COVID-19 Supplemental Funding

List of Signatories

May 12, 2020

Eliot L. Engel	Lizzie Fletcher	Denny Heck
Stephen F. Lynch	Mark Pocan	Brian Fitzpatrick
Derek Kilmer	Steve Cohen	A. Donald McEachin
Thomas R. Suozzi	Jamie Raskin	Brenda L. Lawrence
Danny K. Davis	Terri A. Sewell	Jim Costa
Brian Higgins	Adriano Espaillat	Jahana Hayes
TJ Cox	C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger	Ruben Gallego
Gwen S. Moore	William R. Keating	Ed Perlmutter
G. K. Butterfield	Nanette Diaz Barragán	Suzan K. DelBene
Emanuel Cleaver, II	Kendra S. Horn	Darren Soto
Adam Smith	Tom O'Halleran	John P. Sarbanes
John B. Larson	Henry Cuellar	Debbie Dingell
Nydia M. Velázquez	Chellie Pingree	Sean Casten
Lisa Blunt Rochester	Cedric L. Richmond	Mike Doyle
Eleanor Holmes Norton	Mary Gay Scanlon	David Trone
Peter A. DeFazio	Anthony G. Brown	Paul D. Tonko
Cindy Axne	Kathy Castor	Deb Haaland
Barbara Lee	Brendan F. Boyle	Dwight Evans
David N. Cicilline	Marcia L. Fudge	Max Rose

Anthony Brindisi
Earl Blumenauer
Bennie G. Thompson
Suzanne Bonamici
Sylvia R. Garcia
Joseph P. Kennedy, III
John Katko
Carolyn B. Maloney
Matthew Cartwright
Jerrold Nadler
Rick Larsen
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
J. Luis Correa
Stephanie Murphy
Ron Kind
Ilhan Omar
Yvette D. Clarke
Joseph D. Morelle
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Tulsi Gabbard
Pramila Jayapal
Elise M. Stefanik
John Yarmuth
Kurt Schrader
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Gerald E. Connolly

Seth Moulton
David Scott
Jason Crow
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Kathleen M. Rice
Ann McLane Kuster
Steve Stivers
Raul Grijalva
Madeleine Dean
Susan Wild
Conor Lamb
Elaine G. Luria
Jan Schakowsky
Andy Kim
James R. Langevin
Scott Peters
Wm. Lacy Clay
Dave Loebsack
Chris Pappas
Daniel T. Kildee
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Mark Takano
Tony Cárdenas
Ann Kirkpatrick
Joyce Beatty
Julia Brownley

Marc A. Veasey
Jim Himes
Steven Horsford
Veronica Escobar
Andy Levin
Sharice L. Davids
Abby Finkenauer
Harley Rouda
Ro Khanna
Elissa Slotkin
Sean Patrick Maloney
Alex X. Mooney
Cheri Bustos
Bobby L. Rush
Vicente Gonzalez
Lori Trahan
Alan Lowenthal
Diana DeGette
Joe Courtney
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Albio Sires
Hakeem Jeffries
Doris Matsui
Joe Neguse
Al Lawson