

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 8, 2019

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

We write to request information on the process of awarding the Fiscal Year 2020 funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). While we appreciate the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) early release of LIHEAP funding following the passage of a Continuing Resolution on September 27, 2019, we are alarmed that funding awarded to Massachusetts fell by a disproportionate amount for the second year in a row.

On November 1, 2019, HHS announced the release of 90 percent of the anticipated FY20 LIHEAP funds available under the current Continuing Resolution. In this release of funds, Massachusetts received just \$114 million, and without changes, we anticipate the Commonwealth to receive a total of less than \$127 million in LIHEAP funds for Fiscal Year 2020.

This loss of funding follows a 7.6 percent decrease in LIHEAP funding for Massachusetts from FY18 to FY19. If these funding cuts continue as expected in FY20, Massachusetts stands to lose more than 14 percent of its LIHEAP funding from FY18 to FY20, despite record-breaking cold during the polar vortex of 2018-2019. This repeated drop in year-over-year funding comes even as overall LIHEAP appropriations have increased by \$50 million from FY18 to FY20. Nine other states have also lost funding over this time period.

The Massachusetts state legislature was already forced to make up for previous years' shortfall by providing \$30 million in supplemental funding for the LIHEAP program over FY19 and FY20. However, Massachusetts cannot continue to pick up the costs of the federal government's failure to allocate appropriate funding to the state.

The Trump administration's use of outdated and inaccurate formulas continues to disproportionately harm Massachusetts. To better understand this unfair situation, we ask that you provide answers to the following questions and requests:


1. Please provide the updated FY20 data and methodology used in calculating the New Formula allocations for each state.
2. Please provide a year-over-year breakdown of Massachusetts' allocation through the New Formula and Old Formula from FY17 through FY20.
3. Please provide the breakdown of what percentage of LIHEAP funding is allocated using the New and Old Formulas from FY17 through FY20.
4. By what date does HHS collect the data used to calculate the FY20 New Formula allocations?
5. Does HHS publicly publish or transmit to Congress the data and methodology underpinning its New Formula allocations? If not, why not?
6. Of the key input elements to the New Formula—population, heating and cooling days, consumption volumes, and cost—which has the greatest effect in limiting allocations to Northeast states like Massachusetts in recent years?


It is frustrating and unfortunate that that Massachusetts continues to see a sharp decrease in actual dollars provided to protect the most vulnerable populations in the state, despite overall increases in LIHEAP funding and continued evidence of dire need. We look forward to your responses and hope to work with HHS going forward to address these concerns.


Should you have any questions about this request, please contact Hannah Vogel in Sen. Markey's office at 202-224-2742. Thank you in advance for your response.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

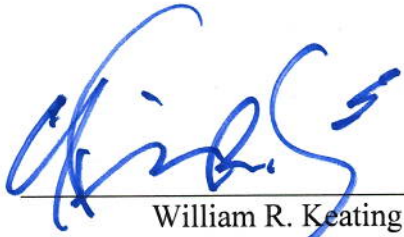

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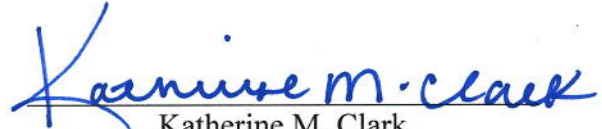
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