

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 4, 2018

Mr. Eric D. Hargan
Acting Secretary and Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Acting Secretary Hargan:

We are facing a home heating crisis in Massachusetts and the Northeast this winter. As families in Massachusetts face sustained low temperatures and high fuel prices this winter, we write to urge you to immediately release as much of the remaining 10 percent of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds for this fiscal year as possible.

LIHEAP funding is indispensable to families in Massachusetts and across the United States during these frigid winter months, including seniors, children and individuals with disabilities. The program provides a crucial public safety and health service for millions of households across the country and hundreds of thousands in Massachusetts. Families in the Commonwealth will soon confront a home heating emergency as LIHEAP funds are exhausted while extreme cold weather continues to strike the region. Families in the Northeast are also facing heating fuel prices that are significantly higher than last winter. No family should have to choose between paying their energy bills or paying for other necessities such as food or medicine during dangerously cold days, but a lack of additional LIHEAP funds means that thousands of families may soon have to face these terrible choices.

Because of the frigid cold combined with higher fuel prices, the Department of Energy (DOE) forecasts that consumers across the Northeast will have to pay significantly more to heat their homes this winter. Families heating their homes with heating oil are anticipated to pay 21 percent more this winter. In the Northeast, families using natural gas or propane are projected to pay roughly 10 percent more than last year and it will cost families heating with electricity nearly three and a half percent more.

LIHEAP funds are quickly running out in Massachusetts. Families in our state are in desperate need of the remaining LIHEAP funds to combat the deadly combination of sustained cold weather and high fuel prices. We urge you to immediately release as much of the remaining funding in the LIHEAP account as possible to help families in Massachusetts and across the country as we approach a home heating emergency this winter.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Richard E. Neal

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas

Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy III

Joseph P. Kennedy III
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark

Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

Michael E. Capuano

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

William R. Keating

William R. Keating
Member of Congress