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September 14, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman DeLauro, Vice Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Member Granger:

As members of the New England delegation, we urge the Committee to include additional funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in the upcoming continuing resolution. After spending the last several weeks speaking with constituents in our districts, it is apparent that the highest possible supplemental funding level is needed to support heating needs in the winter season across the nation and particularly in New England.

We greatly appreciate the Committee's proposed increase for the annual appropriation for LIHEAP for Fiscal Year 2023 which demonstrates a strong commitment from Congress to LIHEAP. The Biden administration also recognized the need for emergency supplemental funding for LIHEAP in their supplemental funding request to Congress dated September 2, 2022. This request shows an appreciation of the crucial role this program plays in low income individuals' financial security and safety as the prices of electricity, natural gas, and heating oil remain high, but we urge the committee to ensure that the final level of emergency funding reflects the acute needs of regions that rely on heating and cooling assistance.

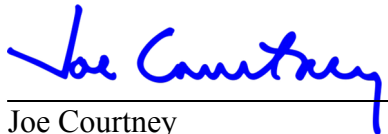
The United States has experienced severe energy shortages and price increases due to a variety of factors including the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Severe weather in the upcoming months could make this shortage even worse. According to a recent letter from U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm in response to a letter sent by all six Governors from New England, inventories along the East Coast are 20% below the seasonal 5-year average for gasoline and 47% below the seasonal 5-year average for distillates. In New England, diesel inventories 63% below their 5-year average.

These shortages contribute to the high prices which are having significant impacts on our region's electric, heating oil, and natural gas customers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index, the price of natural gas is up 38.4% from this time last year, the price of electricity is up 13.7%, and the price of heating oil is up 98.5%. These increased costs will strain the finances of vulnerable families, forcing many to fall behind on their utility bills and make other difficult financial decisions.

Even under normal circumstances, LIHEAP provides vital assistance for families across the country who need assistance with their heating and cooling costs and their home energy bills. With the current energy crisis in New England, it is even more important that Congress meets the needs of families that rely on LIHEAP to afford their energy bills. We urge the Committee to meet the demand of New England and the rest of the nation by appropriating emergency supplemental funding for LIHEAP in the upcoming continuing resolution.

On behalf of our constituents across New England, thank you for your support of LIHEAP and your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



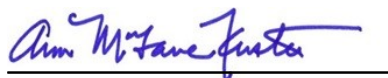
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



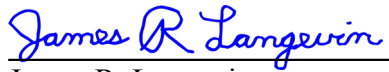
Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



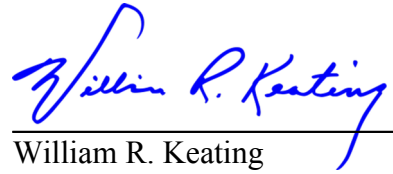
Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



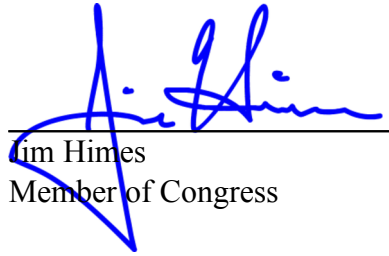
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



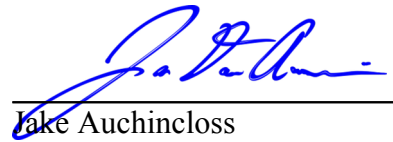
James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



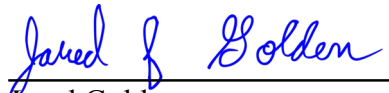
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
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Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



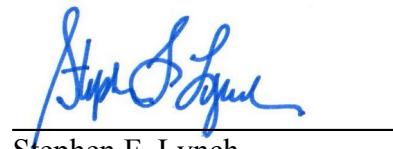
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



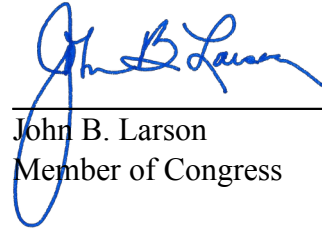
Chris Pappas
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