

Congress Fails to Provide Emergency LIHEAP Funding

New England Fuel Institute (NEFI) Recaps Congressional Failure to Boost LIHEAP Dollars

Congress failed to provide emergency funding for the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Despite unprecedented industry efforts in advocating for emergency LIHEAP funds, the U.S. Senate fell one vote shy of approving an amended economic stimulus package that would have added \$1 billion to the program for the current winter. Going into the vote, Democratic leaders had enough support to pass the measure, but due to a last minute vote change by Senator John Sununu (R-NH) they failed.

Sununu claims he decided to oppose emergency LIHEAP funding, switch his vote and effectively kill the measure because he claims the money was “slipped in” at the last minute. This is not true. **Public statements** of intent to pursue LIHEAP funding in the stimulus had been made for weeks by Northeast/Midwest Senate Coalition Chairs Reed (D-RI) and Collins (R-ME). Sununu had even signed a letter two months ago endorsing \$1 billion in emergency LIHEAP funding. **If you would like to contact Senator Sununu, visit <http://capwiz.com/nefi/bio/?id=376> and click on “send message” or call his office at (202) 224-2841.**

As was reported in recent issues of our weekly e-newsletter, **NEON**, NEFI had joined other industry groups and LIHEAP stakeholders in pressuring Congress for additional funding to boost state energy assistance programs, which are running out (or have already run out) of available resources. Our initial hopes were that Congress would double this year’s funding (from \$2.6 to \$5.1 billion). NEFI and PMAA had sent a **joint letter** to all members of the U.S. Senate and joined 180 advocates in a March on Washington in support of emergency LIHEAP funding on January 30th. Our efforts received some great media coverage (**[Link to Reuters article here](#)**).

A final economic stimulus package, absent any LIHEAP funding, has been sent to the President and was expected to be signed into law. More information on the final economic stimulus package is available on the NEFI Website: **http://www.nefi.com/pdfs/NEFI_Senate_Passes_Stimulus_Package_Feb_7_2008.pdf**

NEFI will continue to work with other industry groups, national LIHEAP coalitions and allies on Capitol Hill to find a new strategy for boosting the LIHEAP funding levels for current and future winters. NEFI thanks all concerned parties for their continued support.

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NEFI — Serving Oilheat, Propane, Diesel Fuel and Biofuel Marketers and Related Services Companies.

Membership Information: **<http://www.nefi.com/join/index.html>**

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