



January 29, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Robert Byrd, Chairman
Committee on Appropriation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Republican Leader McConnell, Chairmen Byrd and Baucus, and Ranking Members Cochran and Grassley:

We write you on behalf of our nation's independent, non-utility heating fuel providers, most of whom are small, family-run businesses and all of whom care deeply for the well being of their customers and local communities. In light of this relationship, we urge you to include in the economic stimulus package an additional \$3.12 billion for the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), \$500 million in LIHEAP contingency funding, and at least \$200 million for weatherization assistance.

Now more than ever, Congress needs to act to keep low income Americans warm. Several regions of the country have already experienced record breaking cold weather and snow accumulation this winter. And as heating degree days accumulate, winter weather forces millions of Americans indoors, and speculative trading on commodity markets continues to drive energy prices to unprecedented levels, state and private energy assistance dollars are stretched beyond their limit.

In fact, many state programs have reported that they are at or near the breaking point – and it is not even February. A NEFI report to its member companies last week predicted a cold ending to the winter and a colder than normal spring across the Northeast. Meanwhile, wholesale price of heating oil have increased over 50 percent and propane nearly 75 percent over a year ago, and federal LIHEAP funding levels have remained nearly unchanged since the program began in 1982.

Our members virtually hand deliver quality heating products such as heating oil, kerosene, propane and BioHeat directly to the doorstep of American homes. They have seen the need up close, and many are partnering with state, local and private fuel assistance programs and charities. Hundreds have donated products and services to shelters and soup kitchens, and in some cases, directly to those to those in need.

We hope that you will join us in our efforts to ensure that not a single American is left out in the cold this winter. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Gilligan, President
Petroleum Marketers Association of America (PMAA)

Shane Sweet, Executive Vice President & CEO
New England Fuel Institute (NEFI)