

## Murphy, New England Members of Congress Call for Fair Share of Energy Assistance Dollars

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NEW BRITAIN - Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) and all 22 Members of Congress from New England wrote to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to ask that she release the remaining \$100 million in this year's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds to cold-weather states.

"Winter is far from over in Connecticut and in the rest of New England. So the remaining federal funds set aside for low-income heating should go to those people living in our state and neighboring cold-weather locations," said Murphy.

While Murphy and the other Members noted the importance of helping those experiencing unseasonably cold winters in other parts of the country, they argued that we should retain our focus on cold-weather consumers. Heating costs in cold-weather states consume more of low-income consumers' income and rely disproportionately on price-volatile energy sources like home heating oil. According to the Energy Information Administration's (EIA) Short-Term Energy outlook released last month, home heating oil is the only winter heating source projected to rise in cost this winter. The EIA projects that the average Northeastern fuel oil household will spend nearly \$2,000 in heating costs this winter.

In releasing LIHEAP contingency funds last year, the federal government set aside \$100 million to aid those states with low-income populations that rely heavily on heating oil to heat their residences. Given the projected rise in home heating oil expenditures this winter, Murphy urged the department to follow that precedent again this year in releasing these remaining funds.

"Simply put, our constituents live in states that experience some of the harshest, coldest winters in the United States. And they shouldn't be left out in the cold in the final weeks of this winter," said Murphy.

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