

Murphy Calls on Cash-Rich Oil Companies to Help Fund Depleted Energy Assistance Programs through Winter

In light of the news that Connecticut's Operation Fuel, a crucial element in the state's home heating assistance safety net, has stopped accepting applications for the winter, today Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) wrote a letter to major oil companies asking that they step in to provide assistance to help keep families from going cold in the remaining weeks of winter.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - In light of the news that Connecticut's Operation Fuel, a crucial element in the state's home heating assistance safety net, has stopped accepting applications for the winter, today Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) wrote a letter to major oil companies asking that they step in to provide assistance to help keep families from going cold in the remaining weeks of winter.

"The oil companies are swimming in money. The least they can do is help people in need get access to their increasingly unaffordable product. While this has been a brutal winter for Connecticut families, organizations like Operation Fuel have done incredible work to keep the heat on in homes across the state, and they deserve the help in finishing the job," said Murphy.

Murphy's letter went to ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Shell Oil, Chevron, and BP America. This week, these companies reported \$29 billion in profits for the fourth quarter of 2010, \$77 billion in profits for the entirety of 2010, and \$952 billion in total profits over the last decade.

Connecticut average home heating oil prices are up nearly a dollar per gallon since the beginning of the heating season, a price increase of nearly one-third. Meanwhile, for the first time in its 34-year history, the state-chartered energy assistance non-profit Operation Fuel was forced to stop accepting applications for new aid at the end of February. Operation Fuel fills the gaps in aid when an applicant doesn't meet income qualifications or has exceeded their allotment for federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program support. During the last week of January, Operation Fuel's fuel banks processed more applications than they did for the entire month of January 2010.

"Put simply, my constituents and others like them are suffering terribly this winter. While state agencies and non-profits do their best to stretch available assistance dollars as far as possible, I am hopeful that the oil companies can lend a hand and help us weather this especially-difficult winter heating season," said Murphy.

Murphy heating assistance letter

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