September 12, 2012

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Dicks:

We write to express our concern that low-income households across the country will head into the upcoming winter facing sharply reduced Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding coupled with high home energy prices. LIHEAP provides critical heating and cooling assistance to low-income households, especially for the elderly, disabled, and families that are often forced to choose between paying home energy bills or paying for food, medicine, and other essentials.

As you consider any FY2013 funding agreements, including a six-month Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the federal government through March 2013, we ask that you provide the full year of LIHEAP allocation based on the $3.47 billion regular program funding level enacted last fiscal year. It is necessary to make available LIHEAP's full FY2013 appropriations up front to provide needed certainty to states and territories, as spending patterns for LIHEAP assistance are not in sync with the fiscal year, and the majority of assistance in many states is distributed during the winter months, beginning as early as November 1, to offset high home heating costs. Should LIHEAP be funded at only a portion of the full year appropriations in a short-term CR, families across the country will have unmet heating needs long before the remainder of LIHEAP funding is made available in March 2013. Additionally, we ask that you provide for contingency funding in any funding agreement, as you have in previous years, to help safeguard against the disastrous effects of an energy crisis and protect against further uncertainty.

As the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) has repeatedly demonstrated, the cost of heating a home in cold-weather states remains high, particularly for those who heat their home with deliverable fuels. According to EIA, nationally, last year's home heating oil costs were the highest in a decade. LIHEAP funding also provides vital cooling assistance for families and individuals in need across the country. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heat waves are one of the most dangerous weather-related events, and this summer's extended heat waves were no exception. Over 40,000 daily heat records were broken this

summer, and energy utilities across the nation set their own records, with many utility customers expending more energy than ever before to cool their homes. This increased demand will greatly burden not only traditionally warm weather states and territories, but also other states that now must use LIHEAP funds to address both summer and winter energy bills. If this trend continues, it will be critical for state LIHEAP programs to know as early as possible exactly how much funding is available for the entire year to help budget for both the heating and cooling seasons.

We understand the budget challenges facing Congress, and deeply appreciate your longstanding support for LIHEAP. As our economy continues to emerge from a deep recession, LIHEAP assistance remains a daily necessity for thousands of families. In recent years, states and territories across the nation have seen an increase in the number of households requesting LIHEAP assistance. According to a December 2011 study conducted by the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, overall LIHEAP program enrollment grew by 54% between FY2008 and FY2011, with military veteran households accounting for almost 35% of total growth during that period.

LIHEAP is an indispensable lifeline to the approximately nine million households struggling to pay to heat or cool their homes. As governors, we have continuously worked to ensure that our most vulnerable residents are not overwhelmed by the unpredictable nature of home energy costs by providing state contributions to supplement existing federal funding. We urge you to help us in this effort and give state governments and the families they serve needed certainty by making LIHEAP's full FY2013 appropriations available up front. Thank you for your continued commitment to helping our neediest families.

Sincerely,

Governor Deval Patrick
Massachusetts

Governor Peter Shumlin
Vermont

Governor John deJongh
Virgin Islands

Governor Mark Dayton
Minnesota

Governor Lincoln Chafee
Rhode Island

Governor Jack Markell
Delaware

Governor Dannel Malloy
Connecticut

Governor Pat Quinn
Illinois

Governor John Hickenlooper
Colorado

Governor Bev Perdue
North Carolina

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin
West Virginia

Governor Paul LePage
Maine

Governor Martin O'Malley
Maryland

Governor John Lynch
New Hampshire