THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE HOUSE • BOSTON 02133
(617) 725-4000

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

July 15, 2008

The Honorable Edward Markey
2108 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Markey:

I wanted to reach out to you on the issue of federal funding for low-income heating assistance for Massachusetts residents. I know this is an area in which you have been actively involved and I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further, given a number of concerning trends.

On July 9, I hosted the New England Governors' Energy Summit in Boston. Although the meeting addressed various energy issues, the overwhelming concern of all of the Governors was the impending public health crisis associated with the rising cost of fuel oil and the declining purchasing power of federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) dollars. Because of that concern, all six New England Governors signed the attached letter to the Congressional leadership (as well as an identical letter to the President), urging that LIHEAP funding for the New England states be dramatically increased this year.

Utility customers are managing extraordinary arrearage balances from the previous heating season and many are facing the possibility of losing service prior to the November 15 utility shut off moratorium. Absent an increase, and assuming level funding,

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Massachusetts LIHEAP recipients who heat their homes with oil will run out in early December – the very beginning of the winter.

In Massachusetts, just to maintain the same benefits for the households covered last year, we would need to roughly double our regular formula allocation.

The national economy and skyrocketing fuel costs have created a perfect storm for LIHEAP recipients. Through your leadership, LIHEAP funding has seen dramatic increases in previous years. Now, more than ever, we again need your strong support. Advocates in the House are pushing for an immediate, emergency LIHEAP appropriation of at least $3.1 billion. I strongly support these efforts and would urge the inclusion of this funding as part of a second economic stimulus package or other appropriate legislative vehicle.

I fully appreciate, as always, your on-going efforts to address the challenges that face Massachusetts and the rest of the region—and I would very much appreciate your support for the increase in LIHEAP funding. I look forward to discussing this with you at our next regular meeting.

Sincerely,

Deval L.

I appreciate your help!