August 4, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman DeLauro, Vice Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Member Granger:

We appreciate the Committee’s longstanding support for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which serves as a lifeline for millions of seniors and low-income families across the country. In light of skyrocketing home energy bills and additional increases expected for this winter, we urge the Committee to provide emergency supplemental funding for this critical program.

The Committee’s efforts to increase the annual appropriation for LIHEAP for Fiscal Year 2023 represents an important commitment to restoring funding to the levels reached over a decade ago. However, because of the run-up in natural gas, heating oil, and electricity prices, we are deeply concerned that we will not meet the needs of low-income families this winter.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Price Index recently reported alarming increases across all sources of home energy fuel over the past 12 months. Natural gas is up 38.4 percent from this time last year – the largest such increase since the period ending in October 2005. Electricity is up 13.7 percent – the largest such increase since the period ending in April 2006 – and heating oil is up 98.5 percent.

Currently, an estimated 20 million families are behind on their utility bills, totaling more than $18 billion in arrearages. Without increased LIHEAP funding, this trend will only continue, straining household budgets even further. Increased energy costs will inevitably force many vulnerable families to make heartbreaking decisions between heating their homes, putting food on their tables, and buying the medications they need to survive.

In a normal year, LIHEAP plays a critical role in offsetting burdensome heating and cooling costs that strain the budgets of financially vulnerable Americans. However, this winter, LIHEAP will be more important than ever in helping families afford their energy bills. We urge
you to help states prepare for a particularly tough winter ahead by appropriating emergency supplemental funding for this critical program.

Thank you for your attention to this request and your support of the LIHEAP program.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

Jared Golden
Member of Congress

Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján  
United States Senator
/s/ Rashida Tlaib
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress

/s/ Jason Crow
Jason Crow
Member of Congress

/s/ Bobby L. Rush
Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

/s/ Earl Blumenauer
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

/s/ David N. Cicilline
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/ James R. Langevin
James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

/s/ Deborah K. Ross
Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress

/s/ James R. Langevin
James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

/s/ Rashida Tlaib
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress