



# AMERICAN PUBLIC GAS ASSOCIATION

February 16, 2010

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
United States Representative  
2108 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Markey:

On behalf of the American Public Gas Association (APGA), I want to express our thanks and strong support for your introduction of the *Energy Assistance for American Families Act* (H.R. 4554) that would increase the authorized funding level for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP) from \$5.1 billion to \$7.6 billion per year for fiscal years 2011 to 2014.

APGA is the national trade association representing over 700 municipally and publicly-owned local natural gas distribution systems that work to meet the daily energy needs of over 5 million customers in 36 states. Publicly-owned gas systems are not-for-profit retail distribution entities that are owned by, and accountable to, the citizens they serve. They include municipal gas distribution systems, public utility districts, county districts, and other public agencies that have natural gas distribution facilities.

LIHEAP, now more than ever, helps low-income families meet their energy needs. Low-income households spend on average over 15 percent of their budgets on home energy costs, while other households only spend roughly 3.4 percent. LIHEAP is a successful federal program that allows low-income families and seniors to manage the cost of their energy bills and helps them avoid the choice of whether to pay for energy versus other necessities such as food, medicine, child care, and more.

According to the National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA), LIHEAP funds helped states assist approximately 8.3 million households last year, a more than 33 percent increase in the number of households served from the previous year. In addition, in large part due to the economic downturn, NEADA estimates that 10 million households may apply for assistance this year.

APGA fully supports the *Energy Assistance for American Families Act* and looks forward to working with you towards its passage.

Sincerely,

Bert Kalisch  
President and CEO