



AMERICAN PUBLIC GAS ASSOCIATION

September 7, 2011

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Subcommittee Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Service, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
2448 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg;

On behalf of the American Public Gas Association (APGA), I urge you to restore funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to the full \$5.1 billion level as a part of the forthcoming Labor-Health and Human Services Appropriations legislation for FY12.

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.

Our organization understands the serious deficit and debt challenges that face this country. We applaud you and your Committee for pledging to adhere to the terms of the debt ceiling agreement and the difficult choices that come with it. However, we respectfully request that you carefully consider the impact of cutting LIHEAP funding.

Millions of the most vulnerable citizens in our country, including the elderly, rely on LIHEAP funding in all corners of the United States. For these people, the choice between adequate home heating and cooling or putting food on their tables is not simply hyperbolic rhetoric; it is the reality with which they must struggle every day. If LIHEAP funding were to be cut, millions of vulnerable Americans, including the growing rolls of the newly unemployed, who are eligible and desperately need this program will not be able to receive it.

As such, we would request that in the midst of continued economic difficulties, a projected harsh winter, and with increasing energy prices looming, you restore LIHEAP funding to the FY10 level of \$5.1 billion. We believe that this level of funding adequately protects the most vulnerable among us, while demonstrating a commitment to responsibly address pressing fiscal issues.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Bert Kalisch
President & CEO