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THE  
**NEW ENGLAND**  
COUNCIL

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The New England Council

January 6, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**Re: Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program**

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Ranking Member Shelby, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

Every year, tens of thousands across New England depend on the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (“LIHEAP”) to help pay their heating bills, and federal lawmakers

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from all over the region have traditionally been among the most stalwart supporters of this valuable program. The New England Council (the “Council”) is urging Congress to provide as significant a level of funding for LIHEAP as possible for the remainder of FY 2014. Specifically, as you finalize the details of the omnibus appropriations bill for the balance of the fiscal year, we are asking you to fund LIHEAP at the \$3.6 billion level provided by the Senate Appropriations Committee in its FY 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

As is much of the Northeast, New England is highly dependent on home heating oil, consuming approximately 75 percent of the nation’s home heating oil supply. Additionally, New England is colder than most other regions of the country with a higher number of heating degree days, making it more expensive for families to heat their homes during the late fall, winter and early spring. Many across New England will face the very real and untenable choice of having to decide between heating their homes or providing for their families. LIHEAP assistance gives individuals and families the assurance that such decisions can be avoided, and the greater the funding level provided by Congress decreases the frequency of these scenarios throughout New England and the nation.

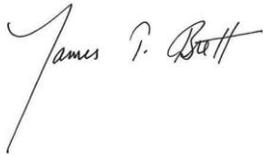
Adequate funding for LIHEAP is particularly important this year, as funding has already been negatively impacted recently by reduced appropriations and sequestration cuts. The requested FY 2014 appropriation of \$3.6 billion is considerably less than those of recent years; by comparison, the LIHEAP appropriation for FY 2010 totaled \$5.1 billion, 29 percent more than the amount provided this year by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Though funding has declined, heating costs remain high - according to data from the Energy Information Administration (“EIA”), heating costs this winter are projected to rise six percent from last winter. Projections from EIA data estimate that average winter home heating costs will climb to \$977 per household, while the National Energy Assistance Directors’ Association (“NEADA”) estimates that average LIHEAP grants could fall to about \$400, covering less than half of the average winter home heating costs for a household. At the same time, demand for LIHEAP assistance remains unchanged in many states.

The New England Council has long supported LIHEAP and applauds the past efforts by Congress to maximize funding for this essential program. We recognize the enormous fiscal challenges that you are currently faced with, but urge you to provide a robust level of

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funding for LIHEAP for the rest of FY2014. If I may be of any assistance or should you require further information on this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



James T. Brett  
President & CEO

Cc: New England House Delegation  
New England Senate Delegation