



STATE OF FLORIDA

# DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

*"Dedicated to making Florida a better place to call home"*

CHARLIE CRIST  
Governor

THOMAS G. PELHAM  
Secretary

February 22, 2008

## **BY FACSIMILE AND U.S. MAIL**

The Honorable Bill Nelson  
Washington Office  
716 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mel Martinez  
Washington Office  
317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Dear Senator Nelson and Senator Martinez:

Thank you for the letters you sent earlier this month regarding the need for additional Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds in Florida, and your continued support of the program. The rising cost of energy is a great burden in Florida and across the nation. Florida alone has close to two million households that are potentially eligible for energy assistance. At the current level of funding, we are able to assist less than five percent of these households. The poorest of these Floridians spend almost half of their income on home energy compared to the average American household that spends only four to six percent.

It is my understanding that the Senate Budget Committee has requested the authorization of \$5.1 billion for the LIHEAP in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget resolution. Senator Reed (D-RI) and Senator Collins (R-ME), co-chairs of the Northeast-Midwest Senate Coalition, are circulating a "Dear Colleague" letter urging support of this increase. Currently, Florida's share of the \$1.98 billion of LIHEAP funds is \$26.5 million. At the \$5.1 billion level, if all of these funds are distributed according to the base funding formula, Florida would receive an estimated \$138 million. This additional funding would provide benefits to thousands of Florida households that would otherwise not receive this assistance.

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I urge you to endorse the \$5.1 billion in LIHEAP funding in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget resolution on behalf of the citizens of Florida, and the programs administered by the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Pelham". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Thomas G. Pelham  
Secretary

TGP/pl