



FLORIDA ENERGY AFFORDABILITY COALITION

"Public, private and nonprofit organizations partnering to make energy more affordable for low-to-moderate income Floridians"

FLEAC Leadership Team

Chairperson
Louis Gonzalez

Vice Chairperson
John Edwards

Secretary
Hilda Frazier

Associate Secretary
Jennifer Felder

Coalition Members

Florida Council on
Aging

Florida Association for
Community Action

Florida Association of
Area Agencies on Aging

Florida Department of
Community Affairs

Florida Department of
Elder Affairs

Florida Municipal
Electric Association

Florida Power & Light Co

Gulf Power Company

Progress Energy FL

The Salvation Army

Tampa Electric Company

Florida Public Service
Commission (Advisor)

September 22, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Room H232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for full funding of LIHEAP

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

In your role as Speaker, we know you are concerned about doing what's best for ALL citizens, and not just those in the great state of California. Given our shared interests and on behalf of the citizens of Florida, the **Florida Energy Affordability Coalition (FLEAC) wants you to know that we too are concerned about the health, safety and well-being of all American families.**

FLEAC's mission is to facilitate assistance to improve the well-being of families experiencing difficulty paying for energy. As such, we are working to bring together public, private and nonprofit sector organizations seeking to make energy more affordable for low-to-moderate income Floridians – and **we need your help!**

We first want to thank you for your efforts to provide increased funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) this year. **In addition to pursuing funds through the second stimulus supplemental, we urge you to include \$5.1 billion for LIHEAP in any Continuing Resolution that may be considered.**

The increase in home energy costs requires immediate action to provide emergency funding as quickly as possible to help citizens across the nation cope with the record arrears lingering from last winter and this summer. The need for additional LIHEAP money is without question. In both warm and cold weather states, full LIHEAP funding may help avert deadly crises. Record-high temperatures have resulted in several deaths in California, Texas, and Oklahoma this summer. In Dallas, temperatures exceeded 100 degrees for nearly two weeks straight. And let us not forget the hardship many American families are dealing with as a result of this year's busy hurricane season and other weather disasters.

Throughout the country, the struggling economy and record-high energy costs are impacting families. In most states, the amount of households behind on their bills is up significantly from last year, and arrears in general are up as well, adding to the already difficult economic problems so many are facing. The National Energy Assistance Directors Association (NEADA) estimates that more than 15.6 million households are struggling mightily to pay their energy bill, given other life needs that are already consuming so much of their budget.

Florida Energy Affordability Coalition

9250 West Flagler Street, Suite 6637, Miami FL 33174

Phone: (305) 552-3274 Website: www.FLEAC.net

Energy officials are concerned that high energy prices will create a humanitarian crisis for millions of families that can't afford to pay their energy bill. To deal with high prices, many families forgo lifesaving prescription medicine, skip meals or do without other basic life needs. This is not an acceptable situation.

One answer to this problem is increased funding for LIHEAP. **At the current funding level, LIHEAP serves only 15 percent of eligible families – and in Florida, that number is closer to five percent.** With costs expected to be much higher in the coming year, far fewer families will be served if additional funds are not provided. **A LIHEAP appropriation of \$5.1 billion will double the Fiscal Year 2008 amount and extend this vital lifeline to more low-income families, seniors, children under six and the most vulnerable in our population.**

A critical element of this request is for The House to ensure that at least fifty percent of any monies above the current allocation of \$2 billion base be applied to Tier 2/Tier 3 funding. Doing so will mean that all states get a fair share of the new funding – and families in all the states of this great nation will have increased opportunity to apply for this much-needed assistance.

Thanks to your leadership, the House has shown bipartisan support for LIHEAP and Weatherization, and we thank you for your commitment to helping low-income families. **We urge you to continue to do everything possible to ensure that emergency funds are provided for LIHEAP and Weatherization.**

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

John Edwards
Vice Chairperson
Florida Energy Affordability Coalition

cc: The Honorable John A. Boehner, Minority Leader - US House of Representatives
The Honorable David R. Obey, Chairman - Committee on Appropriations - US House of Representatives
The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member - Committee on Appropriations - US House of Representatives
FLEAC Coalition representatives