



September 7th, 2007

Honorable George W. Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Request for release of remaining LIHEAP emergency contingency funds

Dear Mr. President:

The Florida Energy Affordability Coalition (FLEAC) brings together public, private and nonprofit sector organizations seeking to make energy more affordable for low-to-moderate income Floridians experiencing difficulty paying for energy needed to maintain a safe and healthy living environment and facilitates assistance to improve their well-being.

As you know, much of America has suffered this summer's unrelenting heat. Your release last week of \$50 million in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) emergency contingency funding was timely, and we commend your action on behalf of families who will receive much needed financial relief.

Even with that very positive step, many families throughout the south remain in crisis, seemingly hopeless that assistance will not be made available to them. In particular, families in Florida continue to "feel the heat" of high temperatures and increasing energy bill debt. There are about 1.4 million LIHEAP-eligible households in Florida, or nearly twenty-five percent of the total low-income households in the twelve states that just received assistance.

Unfortunately for Florida, the cooling degree days factor used in the most recent formula was of no benefit, because our state is typically warmer than those states that received help. Even though the increase in cooling degree days was less than other states, it does not mean that Florida experienced the heat - or suffered the financial impact - any less.

Consider too that, according to the National Weather Service preliminary estimates, August 2007 will go on record as the first or second hottest August in history – throughout the state. No areas of Florida have been exempt from the extreme heat. Because the heat hasn't relented, several Florida utilities hit new all-time power peaks repeatedly in August.

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Besides the financial impact, consider too the effect of extreme, sustained heat on the health of our citizenry. Health officials strongly encourage use of air conditioning to promote well-being when it's hot outside. Those at greatest risk of heat-related illness are children aged 5 or younger, and seniors older than 65 (per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Of course, Florida has the highest percent of seniors of any state in the nation.

However, with the consumption of energy for air-conditioning comes the inevitable obligation of paying for it. It is precisely these low-and moderate income customers, especially seniors on fixed-income, who have the greatest difficulty in paying for their home energy needs – customers that LIHEAP is truly designed to assist.

Finally, please note that while the temperatures may soon begin to subside, the financial impact of this summer's heat wave is just beginning. In particular, August energy usage is just beginning to show up in customers' energy bills, and will begin to become delinquent over the next sixty days or so.

Remember too that with Florida's 2007 LIHEAP allocation, less than seven percent of the state's eligible households have received help this year, and Florida's \$24 million allocation is quickly running out.

We respectfully urge you now to release all remaining LIHEAP contingency funds, and allocate remaining funds so that Florida might receive a fair share and find some relief for this unrelenting heat wave and the related financial crisis.

Sincerely,



Louis Gonzalez
Chairperson – Florida Energy Affordability Coalition

Florida Energy Affordability Coalition (FLEAC) Charter Members

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| Florida Council on Aging | Florida Assn for Community Action |
| Florida Assn of Area Agencies on Aging | Florida Dept of Community Affairs |
| Florida Dept of Elder Affairs | Florida Electric Cooperatives Assn |
| Florida Municipal Electric Assn | Florida Power & Light Company |
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| The Salvation Army – Florida | Tampa Electric Company |
| Florida Public Service Commission (permanent advisory partner) | |