

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 24, 2014

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

As this winter's freezing temperatures and high-heating costs continue to impact families in New Hampshire, we write to request that the Department of Health and Human Services immediately release New Hampshire's remaining share of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds as appropriated in the recently passed Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014.

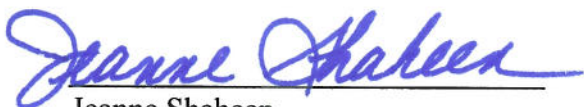
As you know, LIHEAP is the main federal program that provides low-income families with vital heating assistance during both the cold winter and hot summer months. Even though the number of households eligible for the program continues to exceed those receiving assistance, this funding has been a lifeline during the economic downturn and as energy costs have continued to rise, helping to ensure that people do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and paying for food or medicine. Federal sequestration cuts have also reduced LIHEAP grants for New Hampshire by \$1.6 million this year, resulting in 1,200 fewer families receiving assistance in our state, and a reduction in the amount of assistance for families still participating in the program.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects that household expenditures this winter for heating oil and natural gas will increase by 17 percent and 8 percent, respectively. While the average household in New Hampshire uses 800 gallons of fuel oil, the average fuel assistance benefit is \$730, which pays for only about 200 gallons of fuel oil. A sharp rise in Northeast and Mid-Atlantic natural gas and power demand also spurred record-high natural gas storage withdrawals.

The combination of extremely low temperatures and high energy costs are putting significant strain on New Hampshire families this winter, and LIHEAP assistance is needed now. We urge you to immediately release New Hampshire's full share of LIHEAP funds.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator