



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60601**

**ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
GOVERNOR**

February 5, 2007

Illinois Congressional Delegation Members
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Illinois Delegation Members:

As temperatures throughout the Midwest stay below freezing, I am writing to urge you to support the appropriation of additional funds for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to match the level of funding allocated last year, and to block President Bush's proposed cuts to LIHEAP funding. Last year the United States Congress made the right choice when it voted for the Low Income Energy Assistance Funding Bill that shifted \$1 billion from the fiscal year 2007 LIHEAP funding to fiscal year 2006, helping Illinois reduce energy bill payments for a record 370,000 households. Now, states are without that added boost, and President Bush's proposed budget threatens to cut \$404 million from LIHEAP programs across the country. It is time to stand together and fight to increase – not cut – critical LIHEAP funding that protects the health and safety of Illinois families.

Despite historically high energy prices and severe weather conditions, the state of Illinois has provided more energy assistance to nearly 245,000 low-income residents this year. Still, there are nearly 800,000 households in Illinois eligible to receive assistance from the LIHEAP program – demonstrating the growing need for energy assistance.

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) will continue to accept LIHEAP applications until the funding runs out. With less than approximately \$30 million remaining, we hope to continue through the beginning of March. However, without any additional funding, any LIHEAP applications submitted after that time would be rejected, leaving vulnerable families without any help fending off the dangerously cold weather.

Without this additional funding, low-income seniors and families will again be faced with difficult choices – paying for prescription drugs or paying their electricity bills, buying food or heating their homes. Please protect the households that need energy assistance to keep their families safe and warm and those who are facing disconnection by voting to appropriate \$1

billion for LIHEAP again this year to be distributed to the states using the same formula used in the spring of 2006, and by blocking proposed LIHEAP cuts in the President's budget. With your help, the state of Illinois will be better prepared to respond the needs of all of its citizens this year.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor