

Castle Announces \$271,819 in Emergency Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs Funds; Sends Letter

Wilmington, D.E. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today announced \$271,819 in emergency Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs (LIHEAP) funds from a draw down of \$100 million that was recently released to the various states. This funding for Delaware is in addition to an already allotted \$5.4 million for Fiscal Year 2006, bringing the total LIHEAP funding for FY 2006 to close to \$5.7 million. Additionally, there is \$101 million left in emergency contingency funds about which Congressman Castle sent a letter to President Bush. The letter also requests an increase in the base funding for the next fiscal year.

In addition to the \$5.7 million in federal funding, Governor Ruth Ann Minner and legislative leaders recently announced an agreement to funnel \$3.2 million to help low-income Delawareans pay their heating bills and provide home weatherization assistance and furnace replacements.

A copy of the letter to President Bush is copied below.

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January 19, 2006

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I would first like to thank you for the \$100 million that was recently released to the states in emergency Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs (LIHEAP) funds. While the state of Delaware will benefit from this funding, I am writing to express my serious concern for the overall distribution formula used to allocate this funding. It goes without saying that emergency funding should be allocated based on need: for home heating costs in the Northeast in the winter, or a heat wave in the South during the summer. I am writing to not only urge you to release the remaining \$101 million in emergency LIHEAP funding as soon as possible, but also to ask that the funding be allocated with a sensible formula that targets cold-weather states, like Delaware, that are most in need during the winter months.

Cold weather states, particularly in the Northeast, are seeing a huge spike in home heating oil prices, which will undoubtedly place a financial burden on millions of senior citizens and lower income people. As you are well aware, according to the Energy Information Administration, the price of heating oil is 23 percent higher than last year. And, the

prices of natural gas, propane, and kerosene are also skyrocketing. It is critical that the limited emergency LIHEAP funding be allocated to the states where people are suffering to pay home heating bills during a real winter emergency.

Additionally, I encourage you to reflect in your fiscal year 2007 federal budget proposal an increase in funding for LIHEAP. As you know, LIHEAP is currently authorized at around \$5.1 billion, but actual funding has hovered around \$2 billion since the 1980's, despite inflation and significantly increased energy costs. An increase in LIHEAP funding would ensure that every state in the country receives an increase in this important investment.

I know we share in our commitment to helping those in need ensure their homes are kept warm during the winter months and I look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Michael N. Castle

Member of Congress