

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Secretary Becerra,

We greatly appreciate your efforts to alleviate increased home energy costs from pandemic-induced volatility in global energy markets for households this winter through effective administration of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), including the pre-emptive release of \$3.37 billion in FY22 funding for the program at the beginning of the winter heating season. With the enactment of the FY22 Omnibus Appropriations Act, a further \$425 million in LIHEAP funding is available and we urge you to expedite the delivery of these funds to the states. However, more needs to be done. While we commend President Biden's leadership in addressing rising fuel costs caused by Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, we are nonetheless concerned that this war could worsen and prolong the financial impact of high energy prices on American families.

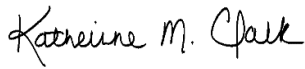
Americans have already begun to feel the financial impact of Russian President Vladimir Putin's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine as oil prices surge to their highest level since 2008 and natural gas prices have risen approximately 60 percent higher than this time last year. Prices for deliverable fuels like propane and heating oil have also remained high, and were 40 percent higher in the first week of March than they were at the same point last year. These are troubling signs for the majority of American households that use either natural gas or deliverable fuels to heat their homes. Moreover, should Russia take additional action to further destabilize global energy markets, we fear the subsequent costs on American energy bills will be severe.

LIHEAP plays a critical role in offsetting burdensome heating and cooling costs that strain the budgets of financially vulnerable Americans. Yet, we know that even with the additional funding provided in this year's funding, LIHEAP cannot meet the demand for assistance. That would be true even if energy prices were stable. But as prices skyrocket because of Russia's aggression in Europe, states will have to make tough choices about the number of people they serve and the amount of LIHEAP assistance they can provide to each household.

Recognizing this growing need, we respectfully request that you work with the Department of Energy to determine the impacts Russia's invasion of Ukraine will have on the home energy prices of low-income Americans for the remainder of this fiscal year and next. We also ask that you make recommendations for additional funding for LIHEAP, including supplemental and contingency funding, to minimize the impacts.

Thank you for your consideration and for your vital work for vulnerable families.

Sincerely,



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Susan Collins
United States Senator



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Also signed by:

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Member of Congress

Al Lawson
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
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Cheri Bustos
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Deborah K. Ross
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