

Search Articles...



[Home](#) » [Senators call for quick release of LIHEAP funds](#)

« [NARUC WARNS PEOPLE TO TAKE CAUTION WHEN STARTING ANY EXCAVATION, DIGGING PROJECT](#)

[SOUTHERN COMPANY TEAMS UP WITH ATLANTA'S OLD FOURTH DISTILLERY TO PRODUCE HAND SANITIZER](#) »

Senators call for quick release of LIHEAP funds

Published on April 03, 2020 by [Hil Anderson](#)

A group of 28 senators this week called on the Trump administration to quickly release more than \$900 million in heating-assistance funds that were included in the recently passed coronavirus relief package.

U.S. Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) joined more than two dozen Democrats in signing a letter that was fired off April 1 to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) urging the department to move quickly to disperse the appropriation for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The letter, released by U.S. Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), called LIHEAP an “indispensable lifeline” for low-income Americans who may now be unemployed because of the pandemic.

“As the economic impact of the coronavirus spreads, it will disproportionately hit low-wage workers who often live paycheck to paycheck,” said the letter to HHS Secretary Alex Azar. “In most states, traditional unemployment only covers a portion of a worker’s average weekly wages. For these workers, working from home is not an option and a missed paycheck could have a significant impact on their finances.”



© Shutterstock

SCIENCE MATTERS

LEARN WHY



The Academy of
Natural Sciences

The \$900 million was contained in the massive Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, that was passed March 27 and was quickly signed by President Trump. The funds, however, remain stalled along with another \$37 million that had been siphoned out of the LIHEAP program earlier in the year to help fund the initial emergency response to the coronavirus; that funding was promptly ordered restored by Congress, but has also not made its way to the LIHEAP coffers.

“Together, these funds will provide assistance to approximately three million low-income households when they need it most,” the letter stated.

The senators cited reports from the National Energy Assistance Directors’ Association (NEADA) that LIHEAP applications were already surging as

stunned Americans found themselves squeezed between lost income and winter heating bills. “Already some areas are reporting that requests for assistance have tripled,” the letter said. “Releasing this funding now is critical for state and community organizations to be able to support these families and seniors during this time and provide some measure of stability by assisting with the costs of utilities to keep the lights and heat on and people in their homes.”

The \$900 million brought the total appropriation for LIHEAP in fiscal year 2020 to \$4.64 billion, according to NEADA. The additional money will primarily go into the second tier of the LIHEAP funding formula, which will benefit warmer-weather states that would otherwise receive a smaller allocation.

A blog posting by NEADA noted that LIHEAP has been a convenient means of getting assistance to the public during times of emergency, including the recovery from Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the Great Recession in 2009.



However, NEADA said, the LIHEAP appropriation for the next fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1, was by no means guaranteed and urged advocates to keep a close eye on what promises to be a turbulent election year on Capitol Hill.

NEADA said, “All bets on process are off as the public health and economic uncertainty ensures the congressional timeline and process will be adjusted as events warrant.”

[« NARUC WARNS PEOPLE TO TAKE CAUTION WHEN STARTING ANY EXCAVATION, DIGGING PROJECT](#)

[SOUTHERN COMPANY TEAMS UP WITH ATLANTA'S OLD FOURTH DISTILLERY TO PRODUCE HAND SANITIZER »](#)

PODCAST

Have an idea for our new podcast?

[Share It with Us](#)

[Utility consumers and the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative](#)

CONNECT WITH US



SIGN UP FOR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

First Name

Last Name

Email Address *

Subscribe!



Please review our [Privacy Policy](#) before submitting.

MOST READ LAST 7 DAYS

- [New Mexico authorities approve request to abandon San Juan coal-fired station](#)
- [Southern Company teams up with Atlanta's Old Fourth Distillery to produce hand sanitizer](#)
- [Duke Energy Florida to reduce customers' bills in May due to COVID-19](#)
- [Sequestered in power plants or at-home call centers: Consumers Energy in the age of COVID-19](#)
- [Alaska senators sponsor bill to purchase oil for Strategic Petroleum Reserve](#)
- [NY State passes bill to facilitate siting, construction of clean energy projects](#)
- [Senators call for quick release of LIHEAP funds](#)
- [COVID-19 heightens the need for safe digging practices](#)
- [Xcel Energy selling off Mankato Energy Center to fund COVID-19 recovery support](#)
- [Georgia Power to reuse coal ash from retired Plant Mitchell](#)



Web:
Email,
Your S

LATEST POLICY NEWS

- [DOE issues funding opportunity for energy storage technologies](#)
- [FERC assures NASUCA it's functioning fully during pandemic](#)
- [PG&E rallies support for home stretch of bankruptcy case](#)
- [Alaska senators sponsor bill to purchase oil for Strategic Petroleum Reserve](#)
- [Georgia Power to extend its suspension of disconnects during COVID-19 crisis](#)

NEWS ARCHIVE

2020

2019

2018

2017

2016

[DailyEnergyInsider](#) | Your Resource for Energy Policy and News

Copyright © 2020. All rights reserved. | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Sitemap](#)