

Delegation announces \$1.3 million for Vermont home heating assistance

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Burlington, VT - U.S. Senators Bernie Sanders and Patrick Leahy and Congressman Peter Welch today announced the release of \$40 million in home heating assistance.

The latest round of emergency heating aid included \$1.3 million for Vermont, where a new layer of snow was falling and the low temperature tonight was predicted to be around 17 degrees in Burlington.

The White House is still sitting on another \$120 million in emergency funds that President Bush has not released to states during a cold winter when heating oil prices have soared to record highs around \$3.40 a gallon.

"The good news is that help paying home heating bills is going to states like Vermont where the need is greatest," Sanders said. "I strongly encourage the White House to release the remaining funds because the high price of home heating fuel is stretching the budgets of seniors on fixed incomes, families with children and people with disabilities."

"It is a good thing that this help is on the way to families across the state that are feeling the pressure of high heating costs," Leahy said. "But the need is great, and I urge the administration to release the additional \$120 million that Congress has made available. No family should be forced to choose between heating bills and putting food on the table."

Welch said, "The continued high cost of heating fuel is crippling Vermonters' already tight budgets and threatens the well-being of many of our neighbors struggling to get by. This release is welcome news, but with oil at record high prices again this week, we need energy policies that will bring the excessive cost of fuel under control."

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program provides critical help to 5.8 million senior citizens on fixed incomes and low-income families with children, including approximately 20,000 households in Vermont.