

The White House today released about \$1.8 million in emergency home heating assistance for Vermont. The emergency funds are in addition to \$25.6 million already distributed to the state.

Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) were pleased that President Obama responded so quickly to their request to release the emergency home heating assistance, but they expressed disappointment with Vermont's share of the \$490 million distributed nationwide today. The delegation is sending a letter to ask the president to immediately distribute another \$100 million in remaining emergency funds to hard-hit, cold-weather states like Vermont.

Sanders said, "We're glad to see the emergency funds released but very disappointed that the distribution fails to adequately recognize the crisis for families and seniors trying to make it through a cold winter with rising fuel prices."

Leahy said, "We are pleased that the president promptly responded to our request, though we continue to hope to see more funding for Vermont now that we are deep into the winter months of greatest need. This help is a lifeline for thousands of low-income families and seniors in Vermont who are being forced to make the impossible choice between paying their home energy bills or affording other basic needs such as prescription drugs, food and shelter."

Welch said, "Even in times of relative prosperity, countless Vermonters rely on LIHEAP to help them through the cold of winter. In today's economy, the need is far greater. We are appreciative of the \$1.8 million in emergency assistance Vermont has received and we remain hopeful that President Obama will allocate more federal funds to cold weather states like ours as soon as possible."

The emergency funds are allotted among the states at the president's discretion. Vermont's \$1.8 million share was from a nationwide pool of \$490 million distributed to all 50 states and the District of Columbia under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Sanders last year authored legislation, cosponsored by Leahy, which doubled funding for home heating assistance to \$5.1 billion, the highest funding level in the program's history. Welch

sponsored companion legislation in the House.

Congress set aside the same amount for home heating assistance for this winter.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program provides critical help to senior citizens on fixed incomes and low-income families with children.