

[By Samantha Fields](#)

(Host) Vermont's congressional delegation announced today the immediate release of more than \$11 million in heating assistance to low income Vermonters.

But that doesn't mean the uncertainty over funding for LIHEAP - the low income home energy assistance program - is over.

Congressman Peter Welch says the money released today is critically important. But the big budget debate still looms ahead.

(Welch) "The administration is looking to cut this and the Congress, especially with the majority in the house, is looking to cut the LIHEAP funding significantly. And that's going to be a real battle."

(Host) Welch says that, with the cost of oil pushing \$4 dollars a gallon, LIHEAP should be fully funded.

(Welch) "We've got to help folks who have no ability to control the cost of home heating oil by fully funding LIHEAP. That is an area where we ought to come together and just acknowledge , hey,we've gotta help folks who are in danger of freezing in the winter."

(Host) Last year, 27 thousand Vermonters received assistance from LIHEAP. That number is expected to rise this year, along with increasing fuel prices.