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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2012

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairmen Rogers and Rehberg, and Ranking Members Dicks and DeLauro:

As you know, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides a vital safety net for our nation's low-income households. The program was funded at \$3.47 billion in FY2012. While we appreciate this funding level, and the help it will offer almost 9 million households in 2012, we believe that greater funding is necessary to meet the needs of our constituents as heating oil costs remain high and economic hardship continues. We write to urge you to consider funding the LIHEAP program at its authorized level of \$5.1 billion in FY2013.

LIHEAP is the main federal program that helps low-income households, veterans and seniors with their energy bills, providing vital assistance during both the cold winter and hot summer months. This funding remains a lifeline to millions of Americans as the unemployment rate and energy costs remain high. LIHEAP helps to ensure that people do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and paying for food or medicine. Moreover, the funds invested in LIHEAP help to stimulate the economy, generating \$1.13 in economic activity for every dollar in benefits paid, according to economists Mark Zandi and Alan S. Blinder.

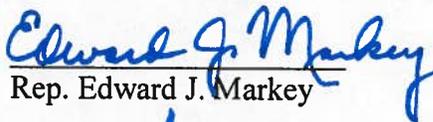
As a result of the economic downturn and already high energy prices, record numbers of families continue to turn to LIHEAP for assistance for the third year in a row. According to the National Energy Assistance Director's Association (NEADA), approximately 8.9 million families nationwide received LIHEAP heating assistance last winter, an increase of 16 percent from two years ago. But even at those levels, only about 20 percent of the families eligible for assistance received LIHEAP aid.

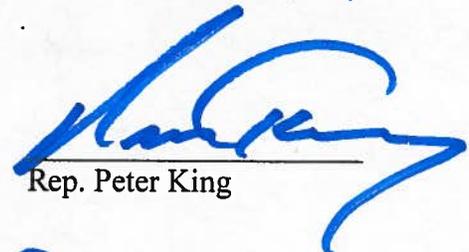
Furthermore, funding LIHEAP at \$3.47 billion has forced millions of Americans to receive significantly lower levels of support during these difficult times. The average national household grant for home energy assistance has been cut from \$417 in 2011 to \$308 this year, a cut of more than 26 percent.

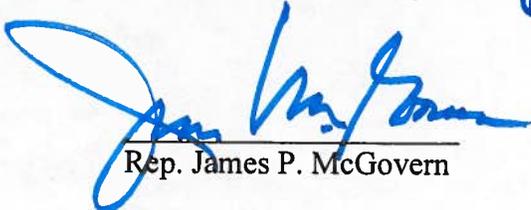
The U.S. Census recently reported that 46.2 million people lived in poverty in 2010, the largest number in the 52 year history of published poverty estimates. According to NEADA, the 8.9 million families to which LIHEAP provided vital energy assistance last year was an increase of 54 percent from 2008. Even more striking is that the number of households served that includes veterans increased by more than 150 percent during the same period. Overall, the number of veterans' households served by LIHEAP, which represents 20 percent of the total LIHEAP recipients, has increased from about 700,000 in FY2008 to 1.78 million in FY2011.

Continuing lower levels of funding for LIHEAP will have a devastating impact on millions of American families already suffering during the economic downturn. We urge the Appropriators to restore funding to this program's authorized level in the FY2013 appropriations bill.

Sincerely,


Rep. Edward J. Markey

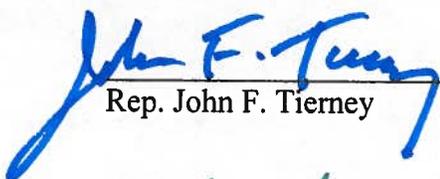

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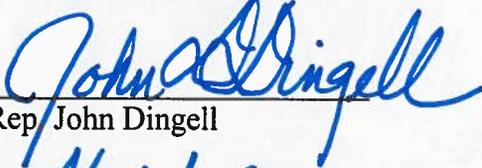
Yvette Clarke
Rep. Yvette Clarke

Joseph Crowley
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Peter DeFazio
Rep. Peter DeFazio



Rep. Diana DeGette



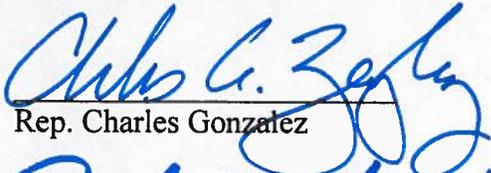
Rep. John Dingell



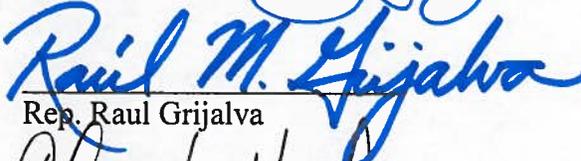
Rep. Keith Ellison



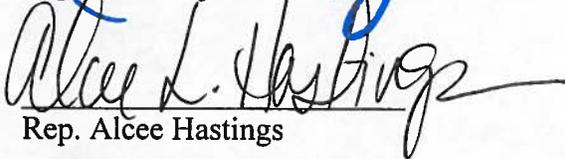
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Rep. Raul Grijalva



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Rep. Maurice Hinchey



Rep. Mazie Hirono



Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton



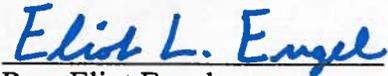
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Rep. Ted Deutch



Rep. Michael Doyle



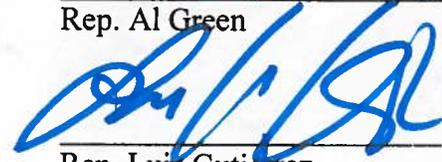
Rep. Eliot Engel



Rep. Barney Frank



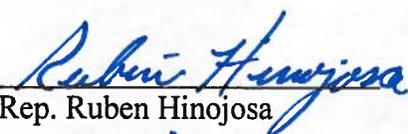
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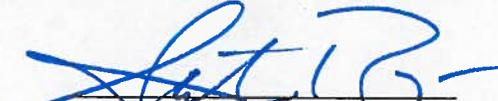
Bill Pascrell
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Chellie Pingree
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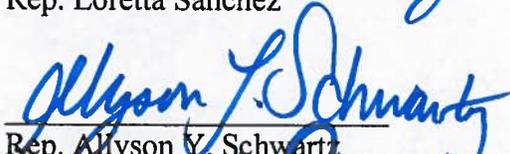
LIHEAP letter to Appropriators, March 20, 2012

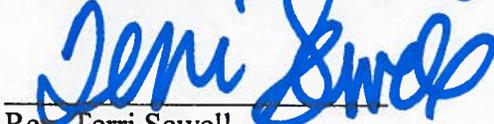

Rep. Nick Rahall

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Rep. Silvestre Reyes


Rep. Mike Ross

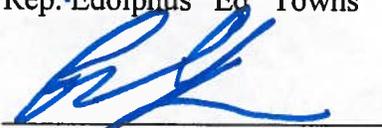

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Rep. Betty Sutton

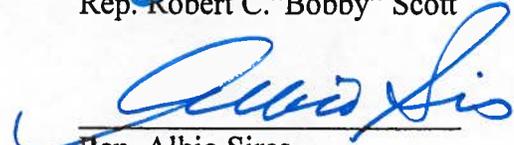

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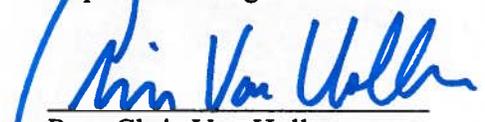

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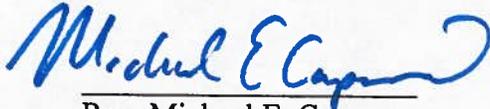

Rep. Bobby Rush

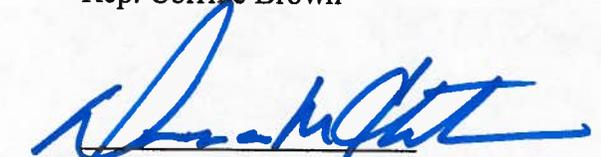

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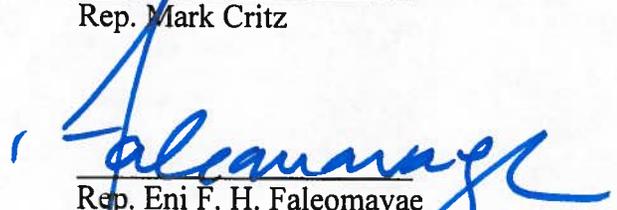

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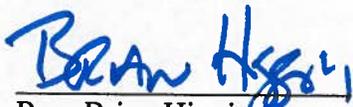

Rep. Donna Christensen

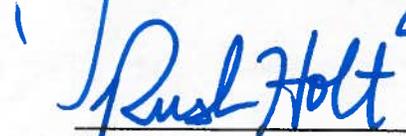

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Rep. Mark Critz

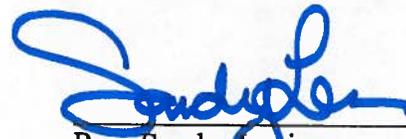

Rep. Joe Courtney


Rep. Eni F. H. Faleomavae

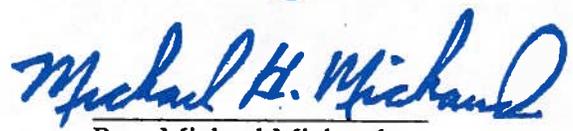

Rep. Brian Higgins


Rep. Rush Holt


Rep. Barbara Lee

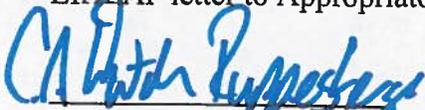

Rep. Sander Levin


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Rep. Dutch Ruppersburger


Rep. Linda Sanchez

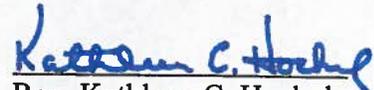

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Rep. Andre Carson

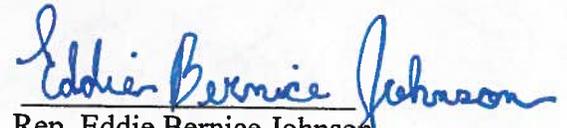

Rep. Steve Cohen

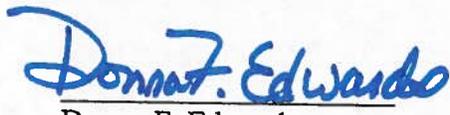

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Rep. Lloyd Doggett


Rep. Kathleen C. Hochul

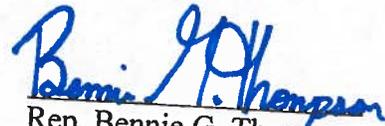

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Donna F. Edwards


Rep. Elijah Cummings


Rep. David Scott


Rep. Bennie G. Thompson