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## **MAINE PUBLIC ADVOCATE JOINS MULTI-STATE EFFORT TO SECURE MORE FUNDING FOR FEDERAL LOW INCOME HEATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)**

*William Harwood signs letter to Congressional leaders requesting more funding in light of rising energy costs in New England*

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September 12, 2023 | HALLOWELL, ME – Citing historically high prices for home energy across New England, [Maine’s Office of the Public Advocate](#) is joining with advocates in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire in petitioning Congressional appropriators to increase funds for the federal [Low Income Heating Assistance Program](#) (LIHEAP).

In letters to the [Senate Appropriations Committee](#) Chair, Sen. Patty Murray (D-Washington), Ranking Member, Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and to [House Appropriations Committee](#) Chair, Rep. Kay Granger (R-Texas 12) and Ranking Member, Rosa DeLauro (D-Connecticut 30), the advocates strongly urged lawmakers to issue supplemental funding for LIHEAP, calling it a “lifeline.”

The letter states, “Households across New England are facing historically high prices for home energy, which are expected to increase again this winter. To ensure low-income families do not have to make difficult choices between paying for heat and other essentials such as food, housing, or medicine, we urge the Committee to provide supplemental funding for this critical program.”

For Maine, Public Advocate William Harwood repeatedly has noted that between “rising electric utility bills, overall inflation, and Maine’s older housing stock, the home heating season for low-income families brings untenable choices between paying for heat, food, housing, medicine, or other necessities.”

New England residents are poised to see electricity price increases again this winter as compared to summer. The region's average residential electricity price is projected to increase from around 27.5 to 30.6 cents per kilowatt-hour by the first quarter of 2024.<sup>1</sup> New England continues to face grid constraints and overreliance on natural gas and delivered fuels to heat homes, international commodities still subject to extreme price volatility. Combined with the older housing stock and particularly cold winter weather anticipated this year, New England families will once again be at severe risk of falling behind on energy bills and having insufficient funds for heating costs.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, Short-Term Energy Outlook, August 2023, available at [steo\\_full.pdf \(eia.gov\)](#).