

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

**Rep. Noujaim: New Energy Assistance Package Makes More Families Eligible for Aid**



***Legislator Offers Assistance in Accessing New Emergency Programs***

More middle class Waterbury families struggling financially because of unexpected increases in gasoline and electricity prices and sharp increases in the cost of home heating oil will be eligible for energy assistance this year, thanks to several emergency energy assistance measures adopted August 22<sup>nd</sup> by the state legislature, state Representative Selim Noujaim said today.

The measures were included in two bills (Senate Bills 1101 and 1102).

“The winter heating season is only three months away,” said Representative Noujaim, R-Waterbury. “If this winter turns out be colder than usual, we will have emergency energy assistance measures in place to help more families pay their heating bills. The measures we approved during the recent special legislative session expanded the number of people who will be eligible for emergency assistance to include more middle class families.”

Representative Noujaim voted for one of the bills (S. B. 1101), but opposed the second proposal (S. B. 1102) because a section allocating up to \$35,000,000 for emergency home heating assistance does not set eligibility criteria; lacks safeguards to ensure the funds are not misused; fails to set specific timelines for expending the funds; and does not enable people in need to receive the aid until at least March 2009.

The new energy assistance measures and how to access them include:

**Operation Fuel**

- \$8.5 million for Operation Fuel to provide emergency assistance to households with incomes between 151% and 200% of the federal poverty level (\$31,800 to \$42,400 for a family of four).
- \$5 million for Operation Fuel to provide emergency assistance to households with incomes between 200% of the federal poverty level and 100% of the state median income (\$42,400 to \$93,821 for a family of four)

To contact Operation fuel, call 860-243-2345, or on the web at [www.operationfuel.org](http://www.operationfuel.org)

Energy Conservation Loan Program

- \$2 million to the Energy Conservation Loan Program to provide additional loans for the program for efficiency improvements, alternative energy devices, and replacement furnaces and boilers. The legislation also sets a 0% interest rate for loans for natural gas furnaces or boilers that meet or exceed federal Energy Star standards and propane and oil furnaces and boilers that are at least 84% efficient, including those eligible for an existing rebate of up to \$500. It increases those eligible for the program from 150% to 200% of the state median income (up to \$187,642 for a family of four)

For more information, call (800) 992-3665, ext. 2019 or 2023 or go to:  
[http://www.chif.org/owner\\_borrowers/apply.shtml](http://www.chif.org/owner_borrowers/apply.shtml)

#### Heating assistance for the elderly

- \$4 million to provide home heating assistance to seniors age 65 and older who have incomes at or below 100% of the state median household income (Currently \$48,786.92 for a one-person household; \$63,798.28, two-person household; \$78,809.64, three-person household) and are unable to make timely payments on deliverable fuel, electricity, or natural gas bills.

The state legislature is expected to approve the funding plan for the program in October or November. Contact information will be available after the legislature acts.

In the meantime, contact New Opportunities Waterbury (Tel: 203 756-8151), the agency that administers the current program. They already may be taking fuel assistance applications and will provide additional information and eligibility criteria as it becomes available.

#### Furnace / Boiler Replacement; Furnace / Boiler Repairs and Upgrades

- \$3 million to increase funding for a rebate program for residential furnace/boiler replacement. The program provides rebates of up to \$500 for people who replace their residential furnaces or boilers with more efficient ones.
- \$2 million for rebates to eligible state residents who repair or upgrade their existing furnaces and boilers to improve their efficiency. Rebates are capped at \$500 or 50% of the cost of the repair or upgrade, whichever is less. The new rebate is available only for residential structures containing up to four dwelling units.

Call the Furnace Rebate Hotline at 1 866 940 4676 or go to  
[www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2994&q=420476&opmNav\\_GID=1808](http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2994&q=420476&opmNav_GID=1808)

The repair program is not operational yet but information will be posted at the above link and will be available on the Furnace Rebate Hotline after the program is established (by the end of October).

#### Weatherization for Low Income Households

- \$2 million to the state Department of Social Services (DSS) to develop a plan for funding weatherization projects for low-income households who participate in the Connecticut energy assistance program.

The plan will be submitted by November 1 to several state boards for input and advice. Contact information will be available when the plan is finalized.

For more information on who is eligible for state and federal energy assistance programs, please call the state's 2-1-1 hotline for the location of the nearest agency to apply for the aid. Residents also can call the state's winter heating aid hotline at 800-842-1132 to learn about current income and asset eligibility limits.