

LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON ENERGY AUGUST 21, 2008

- Energy assistance is more important this year than ever before with fuel oil prices as they are.
- Elderly people on low income will be seriously affected. I fear many will die of hypothermia if they cannot heat their homes.
- In Wednesday's *Hartford Courant* it reports "families earning as much as \$94,000 per year could be eligible for one-time energy assistance under a plan unveiled by Gov. M. Jodi Rell and Republican legislators." This is ludicrous! With a cap that high, more people will get less, and those with \$94,000 of income do not need what others need. This will stress Operation Fuel. More people will need to be hired to run the program, and what will happen to them once the "rules" change? They will lose their jobs. Democrats call for helping the elderly first. THIS IS A MUST! They do not leave their homes (as others do to go to work, etc.). Their tolerance for lower temperatures is not as great. This program will stress all of Connecticut taxpayers, but I for one don't mind if the right sector of the population receives the assistance!
- Last year my mother got a fuel assistance check for \$400 which did not fill up a 275 gallon tank. Beyond that I put out \$3100 out of pocket to keep her supplied - I couldn't let her freeze! With my own home as well, energy costs are outrageous, and I have just retired so my income level will not be as great. With fuel oil costs (\$4.65 per gallon - locked), this \$3100 will be more like \$5000. It will be a definite hardship!
- We keep the house at 70 degrees - Mom would like it warmer (91 years old), but we try to maintain 70 degrees. She often complains that it's cold. At her age, sitting in the chair most of the day, she feels the cold more than we do.
- Community action people are not always courteous - just this past week I called her person at the Town Hall to get the application for Fuel Assistance going now and was told it was a waste of time to apply now. This person had too busy and would not look at fuel assistance until at least Oct. 1. However, the "experts" are telling you (on TV and such) to apply early because there will be many people needing assistance, and yet the people who are in charge of the applications say they don't have the applications yet, don't have the list of people from last year who would qualify, and don't know the distributors who will be distributing the fuel. Isn't that ridiculous?
- Last year we lost our distributor (local within her town) because it was not worth the cost and hassle to them to be part of the Fuel Assistance Program. They said the State took too long to reimburse them, and they could not afford to have this money on the books for so long. So Classic Oil of Oakville (Waterbury) delivered her oil. She got 36 gallons then 149 gallons. Delivering oil from Waterbury to Canaan seems like a lot of miles to travel!
- We are applying for the WRAP program from CL&P this year. The person I spoke to was not extremely courteous. I am awaiting the application at this time.
- How do seniors without children able to handle these situations themselves? They're elderly with memory issues!

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