



**Connecticut
Light & Power**

The Northeast Utilities System

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To: Senator Toni Harp and Representative Denise Merrill
CoChairs of the Appropriations Committee
Senator John Fonfara and Representative Stephen Fontana
CoChairs of the Energy and Technology Committee
Senator Jonathan Harris and Representative Peter Villano
CoChairs of the Human Services Committee
Honorable Committee Members

Re: Proposed 2008/2009 Allocation Plan for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance
Program (LIHEAP) Block Grant

I am Lindsay Parke, Community Relations Project Manager for Connecticut Light and Power Company (CL&P) and Yankee Gas Services. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the LIHEAP Allocation plan.

Overall, CL&P and Yankee Gas support the 2008/2009 plan and recognize the challenges the state faced developing this plan with limited federal funds. The plan is based on estimated funding of \$42.6 million which does not address the increased energy costs, economic downturn and projected increased caseload. Furthermore it represents a gap of over \$20 million relative to actual 2007/2008 Connecticut Energy Assistance Plan (CEAP) program expenditures. We are hopeful that additional funding will be approved and provided through the federal LIHEAP block grant for Connecticut's energy assistance, however, we'd urge our Connecticut legislators to identify and approve state resources that will address this gap and help Connecticut's citizens.

As this Committee is aware, the cost of oil, natural gas and propane is projected to increase this winter. These increases no doubt will disproportionately burden financially challenged customers who are already struggling to acquire life's necessities, such as food, housing and health care.

We at CL&P and Yankee Gas will continue to work with our customers to help them access assistance and participate in beneficial energy related programs. Last year, CL&P and Yankee Gas customers accessed and utilized available energy assistance, and leveraged that assistance by participating in the Matching Payment Program. This leveraging of funds enabled many participants to purchase other human necessities such as food, clothing and shelter.

Additionally, CL&P and Yankee Gas continue to use a holistic approach to identify and outreach to financially challenged customers for participation in weatherization, budgeting and energy conservation education programs that help them reduce their overall energy consumption and lower their bills. These efforts, coupled with the energy assistance provided through CEAP, help customers minimize their arrearages and maintain year-round utility service.

Thank you for your consideration and time.