Operation Fuel, Inc.

WE'RE ALL PART OF THE OPERATION.

One Regency Drive
Suite 200
Bloomfield, CT 06002
(860) 243-2345
(860) 726-9310
www.operationfuel.org

March 23, 2012

Good afternoon chairs and members of the Appropriations, Energy and Technology, and Human Services Committees. My name is Brenda Watson; I am director of community programs for Operation Fuel. Operation Fuel is a private statewide non-profit organization that provides emergency energy assistance to low-income working households that are not eligible or have exhausted their benefits from the state energy programs. Operation Fuel is also a member of the Governor's Low Income Energy Advisory Board.

I want to thank the Governor and the legislature for awarding us $1.1 million to provide emergency energy assistance to Connecticut's vulnerable families and seniors. Since November 14th Operation Fuel provided $1.3 million to 2,700 families and seniors. We have exhausted the funding allocated to Operation Fuel by the State of Connecticut.

Operation Fuel received an additional $1million from Connecticut Light and Power. These funds will be used to help low-income families who will be facing utility shut-offs when the winter protection program ends at the beginning of May. While these funds will go a long way in assisting households at risk—they can only be used in the customer service territory covered by CL&P.

This restriction means Operation Fuel has to find additional funding to cover two of the largest cities in Connecticut—Bridgeport and New Haven. Many of our lowest income families in Connecticut live in urban areas and heat their homes with gas or electricity. This is the population that suffered major reductions in their CEAP allocations. For the most vulnerable households, benefits were reduced from $880 to $395. Along with the reductions in benefits, this further reduced the amount of dollars provided by the utility match program and increased the monthly payments households need to be successful in the matching payment programs.

There is no way Operation Fuel, with private funding and budgeted state assistance has the resources to make up for the loss of aid to electric and gas users.

Thank you.