



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

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Governor Rell Authorizes Increased Payments for Heating Oil Dealers Serving CEAP Program

Measure to Blunt Impact of Skyrocketing International Oil Prices

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced she has authorized Connecticut's home-heating assistance program to immediately boost payments to participating oil vendors by 4 cents per gallon, a reaction to increases on the volatile international oil market that threaten to affect deliveries to vulnerable across the state.

The Governor's action is designed to help about 300 local heating oil vendors who work with the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program. By extension, it should increase the stability of a program that currently serves over 61,000 low-income and other vulnerable households. About 600 deliveries of heating oil are made each day.

"My chief concern is ensuring the continuity of this lifeline," Governor Rell said. "Like their customers, heating oil dealers are affected by a market driven by factors largely beyond our control. Authorizing the Department of Social Services to increase payments to will not solve the overall problem but should provide some help to our participating dealers. Every one of these dealers made a decision to stay with the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program and they deserve our best efforts as we try to stretch limited federal dollars."

Beginning today, DSS will base its payments to heating oil dealers on what is termed the New Haven Harbor "high" rather than the "average" as has been the practice in the past. This will mean a per-gallon increase of about 4 cents for deliveries on Thursday.

The department sets the payment price to oil vendors daily using the Journal of Commerce, based on New Haven Harbor deliveries. On Wednesday, the DSS price per gallon was \$3.29, but department officials reported hearing that dealers were paying more than that because of the ups and downs of the marketplace.

While the rate will likely continue to fluctuate, the Governor’s authorization to raising pricing to the New Haven Harbor “high” will provide at least some increased payment for dealers participating in the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program for the rest of the heating season. Governor Rell said she expects further assessments and recommendations from DSS and the Office of Policy and Management as the oil pricing situation continues to unfold.

Funding Information

Governor M. Jodi Rell recently thanked the Bush Administration for releasing an additional \$3.3 million in federal funding for CEAP, Connecticut’s low-income heating assistance program. The newest infusion of federal funds still leaves Connecticut with a projected shortfall of \$7.4 million in the winter heating assistance program.

Prior to the announcement, Connecticut had received \$61.7 million in federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding. The release brings Connecticut’s federal allocation so far to \$65 million. The state estimates it may need up to \$72.4 million to fully fund the winter heating assistance program, due to burgeoning energy costs. (In January, the Governor announced that she had directed DSS and OPM to budget for an additional safety net benefit, meaning that most eligible Connecticut households could receive more heating oil, propane or other deliverable fuel.)

Program Information

For information about the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program, families and individuals can visit www.ct.gov/staywarm or call the Infoline at 2-1-1. Income and asset eligibility levels apply. The state’s 12 non-profit community action agencies receive applications from about 160 local sites and determine eligibility. The basic benefit level ranges up to \$675 for homeowners and renters whose heat is not included in the rent and up to \$270 for renters whose heat is included in the rent. Crisis and safety net benefits are also available, depending on need and eligibility.

	So far this winter (as of February 18, 2008) (households)	Final statistics (last winter) (households)
Applications	75,704	97,791
Approved	60,893	84,757
Denied	10,943	13,034