



RURAL POWER COALITION

REINSTATE CRITICAL LIHEAP STAFF

To:

The Honorable Bill Cassidy

Chair, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Walberg

Chair, House Committee on Education & the Workforce

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bernie Sanders

Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott

Ranking Member, House Committee on Education & the Workforce

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

April 10, 2025

Dear Chairs Cassidy and Walberg and Ranking Members Sanders and Scott:

Last week, the entire federal staff for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) was laid off from their duties under indiscriminate cuts to staffing at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

As inclement weather sweeps the country and hot summer months approach, we urge you to ensure that LIHEAP staff are reinstated as quickly as possible so that this critical, bipartisan program can continue to do its work when people need it most. HHS still holds \$378 million, or 10% of total funding for fiscal year 2025, that has yet to be distributed to states. Without program staff, it is unclear how or if these funds will be distributed.



RURAL POWER COALITION

LIHEAP is a broadly supported program and an essential source of support for families in need. The program lowers energy costs for low income families and gives people breathing room to minimize tradeoffs between their energy needs and food, stable housing and/or medicine.

Crucially, LIHEAP enables residents to stay safe in their homes by weatherizing homes through window, door, and insulation upgrades so that energy bills remain manageable month-to-month.

- LIHEAP has helped more than 6 million low-income families ensure their homes are a safe temperature by distributing block grants to states for emergency bill assistance, small home energy repairs and residential weatherization.
- In fiscal year 2023, it funded the weatherization of more than 60,000 homes and prevented residential disconnections or restored power millions of times.
- The majority of households who receive LIHEAP assistance have at least one family member who is disabled, elderly or under the age of five.

Rural communities already pay a disproportionate amount of their income towards electricity costs. In fact, the “energy burden” of rural communities is higher than the national average, and in some regions, **low-income rural households pay as much as 15% of their income on utility bills**. This is well above the 6% energy burden level that researchers define as “high.”

Meanwhile, elderly rural households are especially vulnerable to high energy burdens and negative health impacts from under and over-heated homes. Because rural communities often lack sufficient access to utility or locally funded bill assistance and weatherization programs, LIHEAP is a critical resource for these areas.

Recent staffing cuts to LIHEAP are extremely dangerous for the health and safety of low income children, the elderly, and disabled Americans. LIHEAP program staff must be reinstated at HHS immediately to prevent devastating and irreversible consequences.

Signed,

The Rural Power Coalition and the 220 organizations listed below



RURAL POWER COALITION

Alabama Interfaith Power & Light
Alabama Rivers Alliance
Alaska Public Interest Research Group
Alaska Solar
Alaska Venture Fund
Alaska Village Electric Cooperative
Alliance 85
Alliance for Affordable Energy
American Friends Service Committee
AMEXCAN, Inc.
Appalachian Citizens' Law Center
Appalachian Voices
Arkansas Valley Coalition for a
Sustainable Energy Future
Association for Energy Affordability
Between the Waters
Biodiversity First!
BLKHLTH
Bluegrass Climate Action Team
Bridges Community Action Partnership
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Coalfield Justice
Center for Common Ground
Center for Energy Education
Center for Engagement, Environmental
Justice, and Health
Center for Progressive Reform
Center for Rural Strategies
Charlotte Clergy Coalition for Justice
Chesapeake Climate Action Network
Church Women United in New York
State
Citizen Action of New York
Citizens Action Coalition of IN
Citizens Awareness Network
Citizens Utility Board of Wisconsin
Clean Air Council
Clean Energy Action

Clean Energy Works
Clean Virginia
Cleveland Owns
Climate + Energy Project
Climate Equity Working Group
Climate Justice Alliance
Climate Power
Climate Reality Project Nashville
Cold Climate Housing Research Center
Colorado Communities for Climate
Action (CC4CA)
Community Climate Collaborative (C3)
Conservation Voters New Mexico
Conservation Voters of PA
Cook Inletkeeper
Creation Care Partners
CSRA EOA, Inc.
CURE
Dakota Resource Council
DeerStone Consulting
Destination Transformation Consultants
Down Home NC
Durango Compost Company
Earth Ethics, Inc
Ecolibrium3
Elite Energy, LLC
Empower Missouri
Energy Alabama
Energy Efficient WV
Energy Equity Project (a fiscally
sponsored project of Tides Center)
EPCAMR
Executive Director
Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana
Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition
Family Farm Defenders
Financial Protection Law Center



RURAL POWER COALITION

Food & Water Watch
Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky
GC ReVOLT LLC
Georgia Advancing Communities
Together, Inc.
Georgia Conservation Voters
Georgia Interfaith Power and Light
Georgia WAND Education Fund Inc
Greater Highland Area Concerned
Citizens
Green West Strategies
GreenLatinos
GRID Alternatives
HealthyPlanet
Highlander Research and Education
Center
HIP (Human Impact + Profit) Investor
Ratings LLC
Hoosier Action
HousingLOUISIANA
Indiana Community Action Poverty
Institute
Institute for Policy Studies Climate
Policy Program
JPAP
Kentuckians For The Commonwealth
Kentucky Conservation Committee
Kentucky Resources Council
Kinston Teens, Inc.
Klamath and Lake Community Action
Services
Knox Climate Watch
Knoxville Water and Energy for All
Kotzebue Electric Association, Inc.
Lafayette Urban Ministry
LCBC BLOCK CLUB
League of Conservation Voters
Let's Go Electric
Long Island Progressive Coalition

Los Angeles Alliance for a New
Economy (LAANE)
Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina
Meals4Families
Mendocino Women's Political Coalition
Mid America Assistance Coalition
Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action
Mississippi Rising Coalition
Montana Conservation Voters
Montana Environmental Information
Center
Montana Environmental Information
Center
Mountain Association
Mountain Mamas
MoveOn.org Hoboken RESIST!
NANCY LAPLACA, LAPLACA AND
ASSOCIATES LLC
National Consumer Law Center, on
behalf of its low-income clients
Native Sun Community Power
Development
NC Budget & Tax Center
NC Interfaith Power & Light
NC NAACP
NDN Collective
Nebraska Interfaith Power & Light
Neighborhood Conservation Svs of
Barberton
Network for a Sustainable Tomorrow
Nevada Conservation League
New Jersey League of Conservation
Voters
New Virginia Majority
North American Climate, Conservation
and Environment(NACCE)
North American Climate, Conservation
and Environment(NACCE)
North American Water Office



RURAL POWER COALITION

North Carolina Black Alliance
North Carolina Council of Churches
North Carolina League of
Conservation Voters
North Dakota Native Vote
Northern Plains Resource Council
Northern Plains Resource Council
Northwestern Ohio Community
Action Commission
Nuclear Energy Information Service
(NEIS)
Nuclear Information and Resource
Service
NW Energy Coalition
Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy
One Voice
Oregon League of Conservation
Voters
Oregon Physicians for Social
Responsibility
PA Climate Equity Table
PA Solar & Storage Industries Assoc.
(PASSIA)
Parable of the Sower Intentional
Community Cooperative
Partnership for the Public Good
PD America, Nj Chapter
PennFuture
People's Action Institute
Physicians for Social Responsibility -
KC
Powder River Basin Resource
Council
POWER Interfaith
Presentation Sisters
Progress Michigan
Progress North

Protect Our Water, Heritage, Rights
(POWHR)
Protect PT
PSR Colorado
Redwood Energy
ReImagine Appalachia
Renew Missouri
ReThink Energy Florida
Right to the City Alliance
RiSE for Environmental Health &
Justice
Roanoke Group, Sierra Club
Rosebud Sioux Tribe LIHEAP
Rural Democracy Initiative
RuralProgress
SC Energy Justice Coalition
SEE (Social Eco Education)
SEEL, LLC
Shareable
Sierra Club Kentucky Chapter
Sierra Club Virginia Chapter
Solar United Neighbors Action
South Central Minnesota Clean Energy
Council
Southern Echo
SOWEGA Rising
SWPA Municipal Project Hub
The Academy of Financial Education
The Alaska Center
The Climate Reality Project - Finger
Lakes Greater Region NY Chapter
The Climate Reality Project -
Westchester County, NY Chapter
The Climate Reality Project, Western
New York Chapter
The Climate Reality Project: Capital
Region, NY Chapter



RURAL POWER COALITION

The Enviro Show
The People's Justice Council
The Piedmont Environmental Council
Third Act
Third Act Faith
Third Act Tennessee
Three3, Inc.
Total Community Action, Inc.
Transformational Council
TURN-The Utility Reform Network
Union of Concerned Scientists
Upstream Pittsburgh
Uranium Watch
Vermont Conservation Voters
Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
Virginia League of Conservation
Voters
Virginia Organizing

Washington Gorge Action Programs
(WAGAP)
Washington State Community Action
Partnership
WERA Co-Founders, Mebane, NC
Western Organization of Resource
Councils
Western Clean Energy Campaign
Western Colorado Alliance
Western Grid Group
Western Watersheds Project
William E. Morris Institute for Justice
Wisconsin Conservation Voters
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Wisdom Institute
Womxn From The Mountain
350 New Hampshire
350 Triangle

The Rural Power Coalition is a group of organizations that advocate for the interests of rural communities and everyday Americans who pay electricity bills to rural electric cooperatives. We and the other supporters on this letter are strong proponents of the LIHEAP program and its benefits to rural America.