United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 8, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Burwell
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

As state agencies prepare their Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) programs for the winter, we respectfully request that the Department of Health and Human Services release LIHEAP funds as quickly and at as high of a level as possible under the current continuing resolution.

LIHEAP is the main federal program that helps low-income households and seniors with their energy bills, providing critical assistance during the cold winter and hot summer months. This funding has been an indispensable lifeline during challenging economic times, helping to ensure that recipients do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and paying for other necessities like food or medicine. On average, low-income families and seniors spend a higher proportion of their income on energy, and for many states, October marks the start of the heating season, creating an additional constraint on these household budgets.

As the relevant state agencies begin to provide assistance for this winter, it is critical that they have the resources to assist low-income households and seniors as soon as possible. Therefore, we request that you quickly release LIHEAP funds and at as high of a level as possible in order to allow states and low-income households to prepare for the upcoming season.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on this critical program, and thank you for your attention to our concerns and those of our constituents.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed

Susan M. Collins

Patrick Leahy

Lisa Murkowski

Dick Durbin

Sherrod Brown

Richard Blumenthal

Tammy Baldwin

Debbie Stabenow

Brian Schatz

Cory Booker

Robert Menendez

Sheldon Whitehouse

Jeanne Shaheen

Barbara A. Mikulski

Jon Tester

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Elizabeth Warren

Charles Schumer

Amy Klobuchar

Al Franken — Ben Cardin

[illegible] Manchester — Angus King

[illegible] — Heidi Heitkamp

[illegible] — Dianne Feinstein

Kirsten Gillibrand — Bob Casey, Jr.

Kelly A. Ayotte — [illegible]

Chris Coons — Edward J. Markey

[illegible] — Bernard Sanders

Maria K Ziano

Ron Wyden

Patty Murray