



June 6, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the Energy Marketers of America (EMA), a federation of 48 state and regional trade associations representing family-owned and operated small business energy marketers across the United States, we write to express our strong opposition to provisions included in President Trump's recommendations on discretionary funding levels for fiscal year (FY) 2026.

EMA members are integral to the nation's motor and heating fuel distribution chain, supplying 80 percent of all finished motor and heating fuel products sold nationwide, including renewable hydrocarbon biofuels, gasoline, diesel fuel, biofuels, heating fuel, jet fuel, kerosene, racing fuel, and lubricating oils. Our members own and operate approximately 60,000 retail motor fuel stations, supply motor fuels to an additional 40,000 gas stations, and provide heating fuel to over 5 million homes and businesses. Energy marketers are on the front lines every winter, ensuring reliable fuel deliveries and equipment services to keep customers warm.

We understand the President's request is considered as Congress prepares annual funding bills. As you continue the FY26 appropriations process, EMA shares our strong support for programs the President proposes to reduce or eliminate, including: (1) the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); (2) a nearly 50 percent funding decrease for the Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Trust Fund; and (3) the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve (NEHHOR).

These programs have enjoyed years of bipartisan support and advance America's energy security. If enacted by Congress, the elimination or reduction of these programs would create immediate safety concerns and impose direct energy-access constraints and economic hardships on the energy marketing industry, small businesses, and millions of American households.

(1) Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The proposed elimination of LIHEAP in the FY 2026 budget would severely disrupt the heating fuel supply chain. LIHEAP provides critical financial assistance to low-income households, enabling them to pay for heating fuel deliveries and preventing bad debt for small business energy marketers. Without LIHEAP, many of these businesses could face financial hardship, potentially forcing closures and reducing state and local tax revenues. To avoid leaving heating fuel customers and dealers vulnerable, EMA urges the House and Senate

Appropriations Committees to preserve full funding for LIHEAP to ensure continuity of service and economic stability for small businesses and their communities.

(2) Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Trust Fund

Since the 1980s, the LUST Trust Fund, financed by a federal one-tenth cent (\$0.001) per gallon tax on motor fuels, has facilitated the cleanup of over 522,000 underground storage tank (UST) petroleum releases as of September 2024. Despite this progress, approximately 55,000 releases remain unresolved. The proposed FY 2026 budget reduction from \$89 million to \$48 million threatens to undermine this critical program. Historically, Congress has appropriated \$90–\$100 million annually, with 90% allocated directly to states, territories, and tribes for UST cleanup and prevention. Reduced funding could force states to increase tank fees, placing additional financial burdens on small business energy marketers. EMA strongly urges Congress to restore LUST funding to prior levels to prevent costly fee increases on small business energy marketers and support ongoing environmental remediation efforts.

(3) Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve (NEHHOR)

Established in July 2000, the NEHHOR serves as a critical emergency stockpile to mitigate fuel supply disruptions caused by natural disasters in the Northeast. While the reserve has not been utilized since Superstorm Sandy, it remains an essential insurance policy for future crises. Fuel supply disruptions often extend 2–3 weeks beyond the duration of a disaster, requiring emergency fuel supplies, hours-of-service waivers, and fuel volatility waivers to restore normalcy. EMA and its state associations work tirelessly with federal, state, and local governments to maintain fuel supply chains during such events.

We respectfully request that the House and Senate Appropriations Committees preserve the NEHHOR and consider increasing its capacity to 2 million barrels, as originally envisioned, to better serve the 5 million homes and businesses reliant on heating oil in the Northeast.

Conclusion

The proposed elimination of LIHEAP and NEHHOR as well as the significant budget cut to the LUST program would have far-reaching consequences for small business energy marketers and the communities they serve. EMA stands ready to work with the Appropriations Committees to ensure these vital programs remain fully funded and operational, safeguarding the energy security and economic well-being of millions of Americans.

Thank you for your attention to these critical issues. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Rob Underwood
President
Energy Marketers of America