

PETER SHUMLIN  
Governor



State of Vermont  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Feb. 23, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye  
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

I write to voice my concern about several provisions in the proposed Full-Year Funding Appropriations Act for 2011, particularly as passed by the House of Representatives recently.

Like you, my administration has the responsibility of crafting a government spending plan that is fiscally prudent in these difficult economic times. I acknowledge your need to make tough choices to ensure a balanced budget.

However, several of the reductions that your committees are considering for the final months of fiscal 2011 will have a devastating impact on states' ability to maintain the safety net that protects our most vulnerable residents.

Two programs facing significant cuts considered critical to this state are:

- LIHEAP. I share the concerns of Vermont's congressional delegation about proposals to slash the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) program in half in 2011. LIHEAP serves 20,000 Vermont households. States in the northeast will particularly suffer this reduction. First, our winters are especially bitter, making heating assistance a life-saving imperative. Second, oil prices have been climbing, along with demand for heating assistance. Finally, northeastern states rely heavily on delivered petroleum fuels (home heating oil, propane and kerosene for mobile homes), making price increases especially painful.