

TAPE FOR WEEK OF DEC. 13

THIS IS CONGRESSMAN NICK RAHALL.

SINCE 1978, THE AVERAGE ELECTRICITY BILL HAS INCREASED 65 PERCENT, THE AVERAGE NATURAL GAS BILL BY 104 PERCENT, AND THE AVERAGE HEATING OIL BILL BY 140 PERCENT. THIS TRANSLATES INTO A GROWING PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME WHICH MUST GO TO PAY ENERGY BILLS---PARTICULARLY FOR THE NEEDY.

WITH THIS IN MIND, THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION HAS SUBMITTED A BUDGET FOR THE LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, WHICH WILL NOT MEET THE NEEDS OF LOW INCOME AND ELDERLY FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY IMPACTED BY RISING ENERGY PRICES.

FOR THIS REASON, I HAVE SENT A LETTER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN, URGING HIM TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR THE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM-- A PROGRAM THAT HAS BEEN OF ASSISTANCE TO COUNTLESS WEST VIRGINIA FAMILIES OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS.

WE ALL AGREE THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR FISCAL RESTRAINT, BUT IT IS UNFAIR FOR THE PEOPLE NEEDING THIS PROGRAM TO SUFFER WHEN
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THEY HAVE ALREADY BORNE UNDO HARDSHIPS.

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