

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 080329)

RESOLUTION

Urging the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare to re-open the federally-funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (“LIHEAP”) and use the approximately \$13 million dollars in unused grants this year.

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Gas Works’ (“PGW”) rates are the highest in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and these high rates include substantial expenses for uncollectible billings and programs that provide rate discounts to low-income and senior citizen customers; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission’s limitations on termination of heat-related utility service during cold weather will end as of April 1, 2008 and close to 70,000 PGW customers are about to receive pre-termination notices for unpaid bills; and

WHEREAS, Federal assistance for the cost of home energy has been stagnant since 1982 and federal energy assistance to Pennsylvania is only sufficient to provide funds to one-half of all households who are qualified to receive assistance under federal guidelines, both statewide and within Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is only one of two cold weather states in the Northeast and Midwest that does not regularly provide supplemental assistance to households that qualify for LIHEAP; and

WHEREAS, As reported in the March 26, 2008 edition of the *Philadelphia Daily News*, the state Department of Public Welfare (“DPW”) closed the LIHEAP Cash and Crisis programs on March 21, 2008, leaving unspent approximately \$13 million in LIHEAP grants – more than double the \$6 million unspent in last year’s program which sends the wrong message and signal to Congress that Pennsylvania does not need federal energy assistance for its citizens; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 080329 continued

WHEREAS, DPW's premature closure of the program is unfair to low-income customers of PGW and other regulated utilities since they were precluded by DPW's rules from receiving a Crisis grant during cold weather limited termination period, but now that they face the immediate threat of termination they are deprived of the opportunity to receive a Crisis grant; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby urge the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare to re-open the federally-funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and use the approximately \$13 million dollars in unused grants this year.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor and Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare as a representation of the true wishes and sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 080329 continued

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 080329 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-seventh of March, 2008.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Tasco and Green

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Tasco, Green, Greenlee, Kenney, Blackwell, Miller, Sanchez, Rizzo, Goode, Council President Verna, Councilmembers DiCicco, Jones, Krajewski, Clarke, Reynolds Brown and O'Neill