

**Testimony for Appropriations**  
**February 25, 2015**

She has very young children and heats with propane. She has exhausted her seasonal LIHEAP benefit, her crisis benefit and her warmth benefit. She is trying to get help from other sources and we are pursuing other sources of help as well but recently she has taken to lugging 5 gallon containers of propane to the house to keep warm.

Her family is not the only family in this situation. It has been a very cold winter. The reason for the title Crisis Fuel is because being without fuel this winter is an emergency. There is funding in our Crisis Fuel budget that we cannot access due to the stipulation that only one crisis assist is allowed. Last year there was a work around with Special Warmth funding. The season started out slowly with low fuel costs but the LIHEAP benefit was \$200 less this year and is slated to be another \$200 less next year.

On the other hand people are saving money to spend it with Weatherization work completed on their home. When we have a winter such as this one the money gained in energy savings can be spent on more fuel to keep homes warm.

Weatherization is the answer for VT homes, VT climate change, and Vermonters. Crisis fuel benefits are the answer for emergencies. One is a short term answer the other is a long term solution. Together they will keep Vermonters warm. Without one part of the equation our families suffer.

We appreciate the balance and thank you for making sure that families remain safe and warm.