

Official says Mass. misuses heat fund

A consumer advocate accused state officials on Friday of failing to properly administer a \$120 million fund to help poor people pay their heating bills.

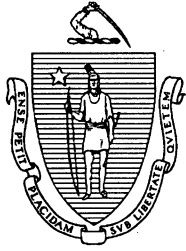
John Howat, an energy specialist for the National Consumer Law Center, said that the Department of Housing and Community Development failed to publicize that the money was available and should have made it easier for people to qualify for help.

"This is incredible," Howat told *The Patriot Ledger* of Quincy. "There has never been a greater need."

Ken Spicer, associate director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, acknowledged that it received \$108 million from the federal government and \$12 million from the state. He said that the organization will not spend all of the money.

The program is required to spend money from the federal government before it uses state money. It will return \$12 million to the state if it does not spend all of the federal funds.

Spicer said that expansion enabled the program to serve 144,000 people this winter, an increase of 30,000 people over the previous winter. Funding for the program nearly doubled, from \$64 million to \$120 million. (AP)



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

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June 8, 2001

D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk
Office of the City Clerk
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Ms. Drury:

Thank you for your letter pursuant the Cambridge City Council's resolution to seek additional funding for home-heating assistance for low-income families. I strongly support increased funding for fuel assistance.

However, it is also critical that the Swift administration spend the money that is appropriated. Last year the Legislature appropriated \$12 million for home heating assistance. It is my understanding that the Department of Housing and Community Development has not spent last year's appropriation. It is important to ensure that funding for home heating assistance reaches its intended recipients. I am including a recent article from the *Boston Globe* that addresses this concern.

Please convey my support for increased home-heating assistance to the members of the City Council. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Demakis

Paul C. Demakis
State Representative
8th Suffolk District

Enclosure

249 S

Consent Communication #7

A communication was received from Representative Paul C. Demakis, regarding the City Council resolution seeking additional funding for home-heating assistance for low-income families.

In City Council June 18, 2001

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