

Washington, D.C. - Representative Lee Terry (NE-02) today issued letters to Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman and to the CEOs of the 's top natural gas producers regarding home energy assistance. Terry is asking for the creation of a voluntary, privately administered program that would distribute funds directly to utility companies' low-income assistance programs.

"Winter is almost here and this issue needs immediate and direct attention," Terry said. "By creating a voluntary program, companies who are enjoying record profits can help those who need assistance with high energy costs."

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The companies receiving the letters were BP North America, ExxonMobil, Chevron/Texaco, Devon Energy, Conoco/Phillips, Anadarko, Royal Dutch/Shell Group, Kerr McGee, EnCana, and Burlington Resources.

Natural gas prices, which heats up to 85% of the homes in Nebraska 's Second Congressional District, have more than doubled in the last year. In January of 2005, prices were at \$6 per MMBtu and have been as high as \$14.50 per MMBtu last month.

Currently the cost of natural gas in the is around \$11.

Excerpts from Terry's letter to the Secretary of Energy are as follows:

"As winter weather is nearing and has actually arrived in some parts of the , energy prices, specifically natural gas, have reached unaffordable levels. In my

Nebraska-based district, home heating bills are expected to rise at least 50% over last winter's costs, presenting a serious and in some cases life-threatening situation for low-income natural gas customers."

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"Voluntary contribution amounts could be made public through a simple reporting procedure.□ I firmly believe a privately administered program with a direct relationship with utility companies is the best solution."

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