

NEWS RELEASE
GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
STATE OF MONTANA

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Governor Bullock Takes Steps to Combat Propane Shortage Impacts in Montana

(Helena)— In recent weeks, propane prices in Montana have skyrocketed, with reports of prices in excess of \$5 per gallon in some parts of the state, up from under \$2 per gallon just last year. With record cold temperatures continuing to blanket the state, Governor Steve Bullock today announced that he is taking steps to help Montanans combat the impacts of the recent price spikes, caused in part by propane shortages in the Midwest.

“With cold weather blanketing Montana, families who rely on propane are struggling to heat their homes,” Bullock said. “The steps we’re taking today will help to alleviate the impact of high propane prices, identify future propane shortages before they happen and make it easier for propane deliveries to quickly get to the market.”

Bullock has authorized a one-time-only 25 percent increase in benefits for Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) households whose primary heating fuel is propane. This will result in an average additional benefit of \$221 for Montana households to be used to fill propane tanks. Current LIEAP recipients do not need to do anything to receive this additional benefit. It will be applied to their customer accounts with their respective propane vendors by early next week.

In addition, Bullock has ordered the creation of an energy monitoring plan, headed by the Department of Environmental Quality Energy Assurance Team. This team will monitor the price and supply of propane throughout the state.

Bullock also issued an executive order temporarily suspending “hours of service” regulations related to drivers of commercial motor vehicles transporting propane, ensuring travel restrictions for propane distribution are not resulting in delays for families trying to stay warm.

Finally, Bullock sent a letter to President Obama requesting that he take steps to prevent further impacts from the shortage, including:

- creating a working group to coordinate the movement of propane to areas where it is needed most,
- investigating market forces and considering exercising presidential authority to ensure sufficient domestic supply,

- asking the Federal Trade Commission to monitor and prevent anti-competitive behavior and illegal manipulation of prices, and
- urging the US Department of Transportation to continue the exemption of hours of service regulations for transportation of propane.

Approximately 13 percent of households in Montana are heated by propane.

Montana residents who need assistance with their propane costs can apply for LIEAP by calling their local HRDC or tribal energy assistance office, or online at:

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/programsservices/energyassistance/>. Montanans needing assistance finding their local office, can call the Montana Citizen's Advocate at 1-800-332-2272.

Montanans who do not qualify for LIEAP may qualify for assistance through Energy Share Montana, a private non-profit organization that provides emergency energy assistance for families facing loss of heat in their homes. Regional HRDC offices handle both LIEAP and Energy Share applications. Montanans wanting more information about Energy Share are encouraged to call 1-888-779-7589.

In addition, Bullock is encouraging residents to fill their propane tanks before they are less than 30 percent full, to deal with potential delayed delivery times. He is also encouraging Montanans to check in on neighbors, friends and family, especially seniors and others with limited incomes. Finally, Governor Bullock encourages those who are able to help out to donate to Energy Share Montana at EnergyShareMT.com

Governor Bullock's letter to the Obama administration can be found at: [LINK](#)

Governor Bullock's executive order can be found at: [LINK](#)

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