

Greetings,

This month, I want to talk about the home heating situation facing us this winter. Before doing so, however, I want to take a moment to thank you for your support, both in entrusting me to represent you in Concord as a member of the New Hampshire House, and also for the support I've received in my campaign for the senate. Serving in the House has been an honor, and I am eager to continue the important work of moving New Hampshire forward from the senate. I have seen what we can accomplish: increasing the minimum wage; expanding access to health care; moving forward on issues too long neglected such as education funding and the state retirement system. But I also recognize that more work remains to be done: we need to fund education; responsibly make difficult choices in light of the downturn in the economy; and make sure the state does not down-shift its obligations to the local property tax payer. I believe we share the same priorities, and so I am asking for your vote on November 4th for the state senate. For more information about my senate campaign, please visit www.matthewhoude.com (<http://www.matthewhoude.com/>).

As we say goodbye to the summer and welcome autumn, we realize that winter is not far off. And with heating fuel prices skyrocketing, many New Hampshire families fear they won't be able to afford to heat their Homes, even those who have never needed help before. Representatives in Washington and Concord are working to increase funds for heating assistance. (New Hampshire just approved spending \$10 million of state money to help people heat their homes this winter. The plan includes \$1.2 million to help insulate and weatherize homes.). Local organizations are also working to raise awareness and coordinate the provision of assistance. If you or someone you know might need help, apply for assistance immediately as it can take a month to determine whether someone is qualified. For basic information, for you or a friend, call 211. The folks at 211 can help direct you to information about qualifying for, and obtaining, that assistance. The line is staffed Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It's a free local call.

See also www.staywarmmh.org (<http://www.staywarmmh.org/>), which provides information on winter heating resources across New Hampshire - along with general energy saving tips. You can also contact the community action groups in your respective county; and they can help determine if you qualify for federal fuel assistance. In Sullivan County, call Southwest Community Services at 542-9258 (extension 4311 or 4321). These agencies can also provide assistance in offering suggestions to weatherize your home, if your home is more efficient, you can use less fuel, and we want to focus on prevention as well. If you're not eligible for federal assistance, call the Listen Center at 448-4553. And if your fuel tank is empty and you have exhausted the other resources, call your town office. Local religious organizations may also be able to provide help. Finally, even if you do not need assistance, please keep an eye out for those that might.

Regards,
Matthew Houde