

From the House

Winter Assistance is Available

By Rep. Matt Ritter

Fuel and energy prices are going up...and up. For those who need help, I want to share information on available energy assistance services.

- **Connecticut Energy Assistance Program:** Administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services, the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), provides winter heating cost assistance to more than 75,000 income-eligible households every year, regardless of their heat source. In Hartford we go through CRT to apply. Statewide consumer and application information is available on the web at www.ct.gov/staywarm or by calling 2-1-1. CEAP has significantly higher benefit levels from a record \$135 million in federal funding to help heat Connecticut homes. Both homeowners and renters can be eligible. CEAP helps enrollees afford the cost of natural gas and electric heat, as well as deliverable fuels like oil and propane.
- **Nonprofit heating assistance services:** Operation Fuel and other nonprofits provide year-round emergency energy assistance to low-to-moderate-income households that don't qualify for CEAP or who run out of CEAP benefits. Information is available at operationfuel.org.
- **COVID-19 Payment Plans for Utility-Heated Customers:** The Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) has directed all regulated electric, gas, and water utilities in the state to offer COVID-19 payment plans, which both residential and non-residential customers are eligible to enroll in through the end of the public health emergency declaration. COVID-19 payment plans are available to any customer requesting financial assistance to facilitate the repayment of past due balances in addition to the customer's current monthly bill. These plans require no initial or down payment or demonstration of financial need; can be up to 24 months in length; and waive any fees or interest in the calculation of the monthly payment amount.
- **Electric Utility Bill Assistance from UniteCT:** UniteCT provides rental and utility assistance funding for those financially impacted by COVID-19. UniteCT has become a model for other states by successfully delivering more than \$18 million to electric customers to date to help pay down their overdue bills. For more information, visit portal.ct.gov/DOH/DOH/Programs/UniteCT.
- **Winter Protection Program:** There is a winter moratorium in Connecticut on heating source shut-offs for eligible households. Customers should contact their utility and inquire about the Winter Protection Program, as well as other programs for which they may be eligible. More information is available from 2-1-1 by visiting uwc.211ct.org/winter-protection-winter-moratorium/.
- **Energy-Saving Solutions – Energize CT:** Energize CT can help customers save money on energy bills by providing advice, information, and financial incentives to make homes more energy efficient. For more information, visit energizect.com.

For further guidance on energy assistance programs available in Connecticut, please call 2-1-1.

As always, please contact me if I can ever be of any assistance. I can be reached at Matthew.Ritter@cga.ct.gov, or by phone at (860) 240-8489 if you have any questions or concerns.