

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 30, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

The undersigned Members of Congress write to express our deep concerns regarding shortages of natural gas and diesel supply in the Northeast region as we head into the winter months. Widespread reporting indicates that the Northeast may not have sufficient fuel supply in the event of severe cold weather this winter, and if last week's frigid temperatures and major snowstorms are any indication, it will be a long, cold winter resulting in rolling blackouts across the region, leaving millions of families in the dark and cold. It is imperative that your Administration is working proactively with Congress to ensure that winter electricity reliability in the most densely populated area of the United States is available to meet the power demand necessary to avoid devastating consequences for the people and businesses across the region.

As of this month, heating oil delivery prices to New York are at an all-time high, and stockpiles of diesel in the region are at their lowest levels since 1951. Refineries in the Northeast are operating at capacity and inventory is half of what it was last year. Calls to release inventory from the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve began as early as August, as 1 in 5 homes in the region are heated by diesel.¹ On average, families who use natural gas to heat their homes will pay \$1,094 this winter, up 20 percent from last year. Families who heat their homes with diesel oil will pay even more, a 27 percent increase over last year.²

Lack of pipeline infrastructure and deliveries to the Northeast region, limited shipments of foreign sourced LNG resulting from the war in Ukraine, and the closure of coal, oil, and natural gas refineries, leave little reprieve for families already struggling with record high inflation and could lead to dire circumstances in the event of extreme weather.

To make matters worse, the European Union (EU) will ban Russian crude imports beginning December 5 and all Russian oil products beginning February 5, a move that will reduce supply and increase competition in an already strained market. Complicating matters further, a potential

¹ Brinker, A. (2022) New England may see a regional fuel shortage, Biden administration says - The Boston Globe, BostonGlobe.com. The Boston Globe. Available at: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/08/19/business/biden-administration-warns-new-england-governors-regional-fuel-shortage/>.

² Jr, G.F., Malik, N.S. and Xu, C. (2022) US northeast is hurtling toward a winter heating crisis, Bloomberg.com. Bloomberg. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-07/the-us-northeast-is-hurtling-toward-a-winter-heating-crisis?sref=ohmtMHdW>.

rail strike that could begin as early as December 9 coupled with record low water levels in the Mississippi River, could cripple the distribution of diesel fuel throughout the country and further exacerbate an already critically low diesel supply in the Northeast.

We are requesting that your Administration, led by the Secretary of Energy, present Congress with a comprehensive plan so we may ensure our constituents that concrete solutions are in place, and they will not be left in the dark this winter. We ask that your Administration utilize all the tools at your disposal to prevent the increasingly likely loss of power to the Northeast this winter. To be effective, these actions will require complex planning and far-reaching communication efforts involving all relevant federal agencies and state and local parties should they be put into place. We also call on your Administration to work closely with Congress in order to prevent a freight rail workers strike that would undoubtedly intensify the situation at the worst possible time.

At a minimum, we ask that you and the Secretary of Energy ensure any Northeast fuel reserves released remain in the region and not be shipped overseas to the highest bidder. We understand the importance of assisting our allies in Europe; however, we must prioritize the well-being of our constituents given the realities we face at home.

We stand ready to work with your Administration to combat the rising costs of energy and prevent widespread blackouts across the region. Thank you for your attention on this important matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress