

**GOVERNOR RENDELL ANNOUNCES TOLL-FREE  
TELEPHONE LINE TO HELP NEEDY PENNSYLVANIANS  
STAY WARM THIS WINTER**

*866-550-4355 is the Number to Call for Help with Winter Heating Bills*

**12/2/2005: HARRISBURG** — Governor Edward G. Rendell said today one more tool has been added to his Stay Warm PA initiative: a toll-free telephone number that citizens throughout the commonwealth can use to get help and information about their winter heating bills.

By calling 866-550-4355, residents can get immediate information about restoring utility services, paying their heating bills, fixing residential heating systems and locating available shelters in their area. People may also use the special number to learn what they can do to help their neighbors get through the winter.

“Stay Warm PA is about helping people survive this winter,” said Governor Rendell. “With cold weather upon us, we need to remember the families who may not be as fortunate as our own and we must do what we can to help them avoid having to choose between food or fuel.”

“This toll-free number will give Pennsylvanians a single point-of-contact for getting the assistance they need,” the Governor said.

Governor Rendell convened a winter energy statewide summit earlier this month to hear from community and religious leaders, as well as union and state representatives, about what can be done to protect the commonwealth’s most vulnerable citizens. Summits were convened in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Johnstown, Edinboro, Archbald and Easton and were linked to Harrisburg where Governor Rendell opened the important gathering.

“As a result of the summit, a volunteer network is now in place to check on our most vulnerable citizens and help people day and night,” the Governor said. “Volunteers are ready to go door-to-door, hold regional weatherization workshops, help with transportation and come up with warm places residents can go to help them conserve energy – and save money – at home.”

The Governor’s Stay Warm PA initiative, unveiled in October, will add an additional \$30 million this winter for income energy assistance. Governor Rendell has asked the Legislature for up to \$15 million in state money – a first for Pennsylvania – to supplement federal funds that may be insufficient to maintain the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which served 350,000 Pennsylvania households last year, nearly one-third of whom were seniors. The Governor is also asking the Legislature to provide \$3 million to boost the state’s Homeowner’s Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP).

In late September, Governor Rendell joined 28 other state governors in asking Congress to increase federal LIHEAP funding. Under the federal Energy Policy Act of 2005, this funding would have increased by \$3.4 billion. However, President Bush only asked for a total appropriation of \$1.8 billion.

The Governor’s Stay Warm PA plan includes:

- Seeking additional federal LIHEAP funding.
- Authorizing up to \$18 million in state resources, including \$15 million for LIHEAP and \$3 million for HEMAP.
- Asking energy companies to help low-income consumers meet their winter bills.
- Creating a partnership with home supply retailers to help seniors and others winterize.

- Marshaling families and friends to help take care of their homes to help lower winter heating bills.
- Enabling the Energy Star sales tax holiday.
- Reducing the state's energy source.
- Ensuring that poor families have a second chance to make energy payments before utilities are turned off.
- Removing hurdles for poor families seeking to reconnect fuel service.

In addition to the Stay Warm PA toll-free number, multiple state agencies are working together to distribute information to commonwealth citizens. For more information on Stay Warm PA, visit [www.staywarmpa.com](http://www.staywarmpa.com).