

□ *Congressman Fought For Passage of Bill That Included the Funds*

Washington, DC - With the arrival of the colder months, Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced the release of \$22.4 million in new federal funds to help pay for a variety of energy efficient upgrades and appliances for low-income New York households in order to help lower their monthly energy costs. The money comes from the Energy Weatherization Assistance Program, which Hinchey helped fully fund through legislation that passed Congress in September. New York received more funds than any other state out of the national \$250 million pot of funding that was made available this week.

"Weatherizing is an important and effective way to reduce the cost of heating a home. This new federal funding will enable low-income New Yorkers, who otherwise would be unable to afford to weatherize their homes, to make important improvements that will dramatically bring down their monthly heating bill," Hinchey said. "Not a single New Yorker should be forced to be cold this winter because they can't keep up with the payments to heat their home. These funds will help lower the energy bills of low-income New Yorkers so that they can actually afford the monthly cost to heat their homes."

The new funds will help weatherize approximately 100,000 homes across the country, including approximately 8,900 homes in New York, saving each household more than \$400 in annual energy costs -- 20-30 percent. The Energy Weatherization Assistance Program helps put home improvement contractors back to work and enables low-income individuals and families to save on their heating and cooling bills. The funds pay for contractors to learn how to use sophisticated tools to weatherize homes and then puts those contractors to work as they make improvements to thousands of older, energy inefficient homes whose residents could not afford to make those improvements on their own.

The home weatherization funds were included in a bill that also provided funds for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Recognizing that low-income people in New York and across the country are going to need greater assistance to pay for home heating and cooling as a result of higher oil prices, Hinchey and his colleagues pressed the House leadership over the summer to pass a funding measure that would allocate an additional \$2.5 billion for LIHEAP -- which would result in LIHEAP being funded at \$5.1 billion this year. Hinchey and his colleagues succeeded in their work to increase LIHEAP funding when the House passed a measure with \$5.1 billion in LIHEAP funding, including \$590.3 million in contingency funds. The LIHEAP funds were released earlier this month and New York received

more than any other state with \$538.2 million.

As much \$250 million in additional weatherization funds are expected to be released in the months ahead.