Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today released the following statement regarding President Obama's decision to release $490 million in emergency contingency funds as part of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). In December 2009, Hinchey helped Congress pass a bill, which included $4.5 billion nationally for LIHEAP's regular budget. The measure also included $590 million in emergency contingency funds, which are only allocated at the president's discretion. Hinchey recently joined more than 100 of his House colleagues in formally calling on the White House to release the additional contingency funds now in order to help more people stay warm. With the aid released yesterday, New York has thus far received $520 million in LIHEAP funding this year.

"I applaud the president for acting swiftly to release $490 million of the $590 million available in LIHEAP contingency funds. While I'm very grateful that President Obama worked with Congress and the states to provide this much-needed assistance, I strongly urge the president to release the remaining $100 million in remaining LIHEAP contingency funds now. The economic downturn has been extremely challenging for families in New York and across the country who continue to struggle to make ends meet. The remaining LIHEAP funding would go a long way toward helping many low-income New Yorkers stay warm this winter."