

46. Adopt resolution in support of conserving federal funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) ()



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Board of Supervisors - Fourth District

Subject: Adopt Resolution in Support of Conserving Federal Funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Meeting Date: June 10, 2025

Formal Title: Adopt resolution in support of conserving federal funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Adopt resolution in support of conserving federal funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); and
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States and our federal legislative representatives.

Executive Summary

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program is a federally funded program administered at the State level that provides critical energy cost assistance to low-income households, especially seniors, people with disabilities, and families with young children. This resolution affirms the County of Santa Cruz's support for maintaining LIHEAP funding and urges federal representatives to protect this essential safety net.

Discussion

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), established in 1981 and administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides critical support to low-income households struggling with energy costs. In California, LIHEAP is administered by the Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) through contracts with 40 community-based agencies across the state, including Central Coast Energy Services, which serves residents in the County of Santa Cruz.

LIHEAP funding supports a range of essential services, including:

- Assistance with home heating and cooling bills;
- Emergency support to prevent utility shutoffs; and
- Weatherization and energy-efficiency improvements to reduce long-term energy costs.

This program is especially vital in rural, agricultural, and coastal communities like Santa Cruz County, where aging housing stock and fluctuating temperatures can significantly increase utility burdens.

In 2024, approximately 19% of households in Santa Cruz County received LIHEAP services delivered by Central Coast Energy Services. This included bill payment assistance, emergency energy support, and home weatherization.

Key local impacts included:

- 1,121 total households assisted;
- 917 seniors served;
- 280 children under the age of five supported; and
- 819 individuals with disabilities receiving aid.

The continued availability of LIHEAP funding is essential to preventing utility shutoffs, reducing the risk of heat-related illnesses, and advancing energy equity and climate resilience for the county's most vulnerable populations.

Financial Impact

The recommended actions do not have a financial impact.

Strategic Initiatives

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety

Submitted By:

Felipe Hernandez, Fourth District Supervisor

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION NO. _____

On the motion of Supervisor:
Duly seconded by Supervisor:

The following resolution is adopted:

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CONSERVING FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE
LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

WHEREAS, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), established in 1981, has been instrumental in providing essential energy payment assistance and weatherization services to low-income households in Santa Cruz County and across the State; and

WHEREAS, electric and gas bills are the second highest cost of living expense for Santa Cruz County residents, and without support, low-income households are often forced to choose between paying for electricity and other basic needs such as food and medicine; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, 19% of local households receiving LIHEAP assistance avoided disconnection or had their utility services restored, demonstrating the urgent need for this safety net; and

WHEREAS, in Santa Cruz County alone, 1,121 households received LIHEAP services—including 917 seniors, 280 children under age five, and 819 individuals living with disabilities—underscoring the program's role in safeguarding our most vulnerable residents; and

WHEREAS, LIHEAP is the largest and most impactful energy assistance program in California and the United States, delivered through local agencies such as Central Coast Energy Services and more than 40 community-based providers statewide; and

WHEREAS, energy assistance protects public health and safety by preventing utility shutoffs, reducing the risk of illness or death from extreme heat or cold, and improving home energy efficiency for struggling families; and

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2025, LIHEAP was eliminated from the President's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026, threatening the health, stability, and dignity of low-income residents; and

Resolution _____

WHEREAS, eliminating or reducing LIHEAP funding would have a devastating impact on seniors, families with young children, and individuals with disabilities in both rural and urban communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz strongly supports full federal funding of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in Fiscal Year 2026 and beyond.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, this _____ day of _____, 20____, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

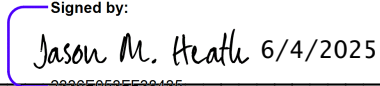
ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Felipe Hernandez
Chair of the Board of Supervisors

ATTEST: _____
Juliette Rezzato
Clerk of the Board

Approved as to Form:

Signed by:
 6/4/2025

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Jason M. Heath (06/03/2025, 25-1971)
Office of the County Counsel

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jason.heath@santacruzcountyca.gov

County Counsel

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Timestamps

Envelope Sent

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6/3/2025 5:49:10 PM

Certified Delivered

Security Checked

6/4/2025 8:29:21 AM

Signing Complete

Security Checked

6/4/2025 8:30:22 AM

Completed

Security Checked

6/4/2025 8:30:22 AM

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Status

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