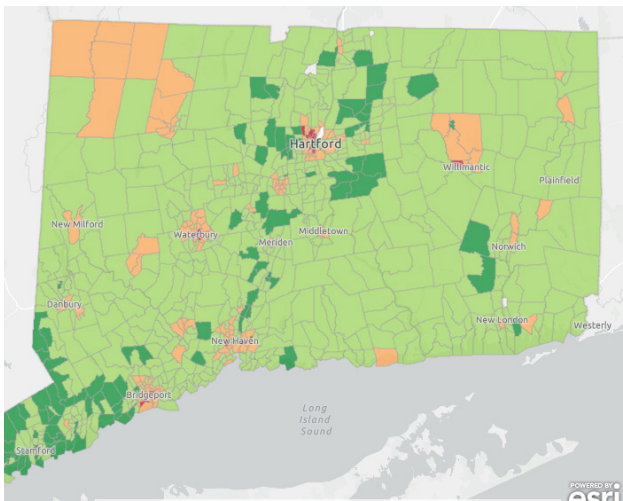


## Latest Study Shows Increased Energy Burden Affects Thousands in CT

Engaging with researchers at the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC), Operation Fuel conducted a study measuring the energy, housing, transportation, and water affordability across Connecticut. This extensive study found that three years into the pandemic, utility bill assistance providers like Operation Fuel continue experiencing overwhelming demand—including from households that have never needed support for basic needs before. The study found that the affordability gap — the difference between an affordable level of spending and actual dollars spent — rose 37% from 2020, to a total of \$608,949,000 in 2023. Operation Fuel has consistently seen an increase in applications every season for the past several years. The current energy crisis has touched every zip code in the state. More than 424,000 households in Connecticut face unaffordable energy costs.



### Key findings from the study include:

- Energy burden is highest among low-income households: roughly **6-7 times** higher.
- The combination of increased efficiency and solar can help close the energy affordability gap for most households in the state that own their dwelling, dramatically reducing annual energy costs.
- Natural gas prices **increased 42%** between January 2021 and December 2022. Approximately 80% of Connecticut households rely on fossil fuels (including natural gas) for primary heating.
- For the past 20 years, **water bills have increased faster than inflation** and more than any other utility bill, such as natural gas, electricity, or phone services.

**Scan QR code to view the interactive map, Executive Summary, and Report!**

or go to [www.operationfuel.org/veicmap](http://www.operationfuel.org/veicmap)



## Staff Member Named Exceptional Sustainability Partner



In October, Operation Fuel staff member, Tenée Mack was recognized as an **Exceptional Sustainability Partner** by the Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven (NHS). Through her work with the Better Homes and Buildings Program (BHP), Tenée works passionately to help low and moderate-income households obtain heat pumps to meet their heating, cooling, and weatherization needs and ease the burden of utility costs.

“It felt good to win an award. When your hard work and efforts pay off, there is a delicious sense of accomplishment when you reach the finish line of what you were trying so hard to achieve,” Tenée said.

Operation Fuel launched the BHP program in 2022. The program aims to make homes more energy-efficient and to deploy clean energy solutions. So far, **we aided in weatherizing 8 homes and installed 20 heat pumps in Connecticut homes.** The new, statewide program will continue in 2024 and we hope to support even more residents.

# Unanimous Vote Brings Hope to CT Residents in Need

On Valentine's Day, members of both chambers of the Connecticut state legislature voted unanimously to pass Senate Bill 111 (now Special Act No. 24-1), An Act Concerning Home Energy Assistance. Governor Ned Lamont immediately signed the bill into law.

The new law provides \$13.5 million for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program administered by Connecticut's Department of Social Services in partnership with community agencies statewide, extending crisis benefits for low-income residents. Additionally, the bill allocates an additional \$3.5 million for Operation Fuel, allowing us to extend our program season through March 15, 2024. This critical support enables us to help thousands of additional households facing emergency heating needs, who would otherwise be left in the cold (literally). Gratitude is owed to all who stewarded this into law. Consumer Counsel, Claire Coleman, was instrumental as the Chair for the Low-Income Energy Advisory Board (LIEAB), along with advocates from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), CT Energy Marketers Association (CEMA), and the CT Association for Community Action (CAFCA). Special thanks to the following group of legislators who provided leadership and support throughout the process and to Governor Lamont's office for supporting and quickly signing the bill into law:



Photo by Stephen Busemeyer / CT Mirror

*House: House Speaker Matt Ritter (D-1), House Majority Leader Jason Rojas (D-9), House Minority Leader Vincent Candelora (R-86), Representative Jillian Gilchrest (D-18) -Human Services House Chair, Representative Jay Case (R-63) -Human Services House Ranking Member.*

*Senate: Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney (D-11), Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff (D-25), Senate Minority Leader Kevin Kelly (R-21), Senator Matt Lesser (D-9) -Human Services Senate Chair, Senator Lisa Seminara (R-8) -Human Services Senate Ranking Member.*

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## Operation Fuel Advocates on Capitol Hill



No resident of Connecticut should have to choose between running their heat and putting food on the table. This is what Operation Fuel advocated for in Washington D.C. in early February, at the National Energy & Utility Affordability Coalition, (NEUAC) LIHEAP Action Day. The event aims to raise awareness and advocate for increased funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which helps ensure low-income households have access to the energy they need to heat or cool their homes.

Operation Fuel is a member of (NEUAC), a broad-based coalition dedicated to heightening awareness of the energy needs of income-constrained consumers.

Each year, NEUAC hosts LIHEAP Action Day, where organizations from across the country advocate for the importance of funding the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program with policymakers on Capitol Hill. Operation Fuel was proud to join the CT Office of the Consumer Counsel and the CT Water Company in discussing this program with the Connecticut delegations, who have all been steadfast champions of LIHEAP.

While Operation Fuel does not receive LIHEAP funds, we still support and will advocate for a critical, life-saving program that serves eligible households in Connecticut and throughout the country. In meetings with congressional staff, we explained the reality of Connecticut with drastically decreased LIHEAP funding— A Connecticut where residents have had to choose between food, medicine and utilities or worry about freezing in their homes during a winter that has been bitterly cold. Every day, Operation Fuel hears from Connecticut residents about how the rising costs of energy, fuel and other essentials have impacted their lives. Operation Fuel stands committed with NEUAC and proud to have traveled down to Washington D.C. with other CT groups to advocate for fully funded FY25 LIHEAP appropriations.



# Lasting Legacy Through the 1977 Society



Mary Jean Kilfoil, known to friends and family as “Jean”, left a bequest to Operation Fuel. She passed away in January 2023 at the age of 93. With her gift, Operation Fuel is honored to welcome Jean to the 1977 Society, a group of committed donors who left a bequest or are planning to leave a bequest to the organization. Her generosity will have a lasting impact on Operation Fuel for generations to come, ensuring that we keep the power on for future families struggling with their utility and oil bills.

Ms. Kilfoil was raised in New Britain, near Central Connecticut State University, from which she received her BS Degree in Mathematics in 1951. She began her teaching career at Long Lane School in Middletown and often brought students home to her family’s dinner table. Eventually, she switched careers,

overseeing the actuarial department of the Aetna Insurance Company. She was an avid traveler and enjoyed exploring Europe and the Middle East, usually in the accompaniment of her sister or cousins. After retirement Ms. Kilfoil resided independently in the family home in West Hartford, enjoying the company of her faithful dog and all the dogs in the neighborhood until moving to The McAuley, a senior community in West Hartford. Many other nonprofits in Hartford were beneficiaries of her generosity through her will.

You can also leave a legacy by naming Operation Fuel in your will. If you have already included us in your will, please let us know so we can properly acknowledge you as a member of our 1977 Society. For more information on planned giving, please call Elsa Monteiro, Director of Advancement at 860-243-2345, ext. 3306.

## Ways to Give to Operation Fuel

### Travelers Championship Birdies For Charity

MAKE **115%** OF A DIFFERENCE!



Sponsored by



Scan the QR code  
to donate:



Operation Fuel has been a proud member of the Birdies For Charity Program! This program was created by the Travelers Championship PGA Tour & provides nonprofit organizations in Connecticut, such as ours, the opportunity to raise funds, support our mission, and build awareness to continue to help our neighbors in need. No contribution is too small. As little as \$10 can help keep the average Connecticut home powered for one day! **Donate today and receive a 15% match!**

### LEGACY GIVING:

Include Operation Fuel in your estate plans to become a member of **The 1977 Society** to help fulfill our mission & improve the lives of thousands of Connecticut residents with their energy needs.

#### STOCK TRANSFER:

Notify our Interim CEO, Roxanna Booth of your stock donation!  
**Email:** [elsa@operationfuel.org](mailto:elsa@operationfuel.org)  
**Phone:** 860-243-2345 ext. 3306  
**Account #:** 815-02226

#### ADD-A-DOLLAR:

Add a dollar **OR MORE** when paying your online utility bill & 100% of the contributions goes to Operation Fuel!

#### MATCHING GIFTS:

Maximize the impact of your gift by having it matched by your employer!

#### CHECK OR CASH:

Mail your donation to:  
75 Charter Oak Avenue  
Suite 1-300  
Hartford, CT 06106

#### DONATE ONLINE:

[operationfuel.org/give](http://operationfuel.org/give)

#### DONATE BY TEXT:

Text “**OPFUEL**” to 44321

# Giving Thanks:

Appreciation and gratitude for our donors! (Gifts \$1,000 & above)

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***“Legacy is not what I did for myself. It’s what I did for the **next generation.**”***