



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

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### **Governor Bill Richardson Highlights Need for Home Heating Relief**

ALBUQUERQUE - Governor Bill Richardson and state officials today helped several Albuquerque residents in the Barelmas neighborhood fill out applications for home-heating assistance.

The Governor told people at the Barelmas Senior Center that he will push during next week's special legislative session to triple the amount of money dedicated to helping elderly and low-income New Mexicans pay their home-heating bills and weatherize their homes before the winter season starts.

"Home heating prices are expected to increase by 54% this winter," Governor Bill Richardson said. "Prices have tripled during the past three years. And this comes at a time when family budgets are already strained as a result of record prices at the gas pumps.

"I want to triple the amount of money we spend to help our most vulnerable citizens pay for home heating costs. If the federal government isn't going to budge, it's up to state government to do the right thing and take immediate action to ease the burden for working families."

Governor Richardson is proposing a \$20 million relief package that will benefit more than 60,000 low-income and elderly people. The package would provide between \$100 and \$500 to help pay home heating costs. The money would be available through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), as credits on utility bills.

The package would also triple the amount for the state's weatherization program – from \$800,000 to \$2.3-million.

The \$20 million home-heating relief package, on top of the \$75 million gasoline relief proposal that would provide rebate checks for all New Mexico taxpayers, would result in significant help, especially for low-income families.

For example, a low-income family with four kids could get a rebate check for \$200 – and home-heating credits on their gas bill for as much as \$500. That's \$700 to offset energy costs for the most vulnerable families in New Mexico.

The Governor is also asking the oil and gas industry to contribute \$50 million to the state's \$100 million package to help reach even more low-income New Mexicans and make a real difference this winter.

Legislation will set up a separate fund to which the oil and gas industry can contribute that can apply directly to the Governor's Gas and Home Heating Relief package.

"The state shouldn't be tackling this problem without substantial support from the oil and gas industry," Governor Richardson said. "The industry's response to my request has been silence. And the silence is deafening. With billions in new profits from high oil and gas prices, these companies should give back – plain and simple."

#30#