

RESOLUTION NO. 17-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE PALM BEACH COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC., SUPPORTING THE ADEQUATE FUNDING OF THE LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP); PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the Palm Beach County League of Cities, Inc. recognizes basic energy services to be a vital key to the health, safety and well-being of Florida households and families; and

WHEREAS, poverty, unemployment and the slow economic recovery remain persistent national problems for many, and most especially, low-income households; and

WHEREAS, low-income families in Florida must disproportionately spend about three times more of their income on basic energy services than middle-income families do; and

WHEREAS, homes in low-income and minority communities severely lack energy efficiency features that can reduce energy consumption; and

WHEREAS, the severe constraints on state and local budgets and the increased strain on the nation's support system provided by nonprofit, faith-based and charitable community organizations have reduced other resources available for energy assistance; and

WHEREAS, the primary Federal program providing assistance to low-income households to support their heating and cooling needs is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); and

WHEREAS, LIHEAP can provide vital heating, cooling and efficiency assistance to low-income households, including working-poor families, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and veterans; and

WHEREAS, LIHEAP is not an entitlement, but rather a limited block grant program which provides flexible Federal-State partnerships to prevent service terminations during cold and hot weather emergencies; to make the transition from public assistance to economic self-reliance; to help low-income households remain economically self-sufficient; and

WHEREAS, federal LIHEAP funding has declined from \$5.1 billion in 2010 and is currently \$3.4 billion in 2016; and

WHEREAS, due to this limited funding, less than 125,000 Florida households received LIHEAP assistance in 2014, or less than ten percent of the State's eligible households; and

WHEREAS, due to this limited funding, the National Energy Assistance Directors Association has reported that many low-income families "will have few choices but to cut back on essential necessities, such as medicine, food, and clothing"; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE PALM BEACH COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC. THAT:

WHEREAS, The National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition (NEUAC) and other concerned national organizations support restoring LIHEAP funding to at least \$4.7 billion in federal fiscal year 2017; and

WHEREAS, another impactful solution to increase Florida's share of funding, without increasing the overall federal LIHEAP budget, is for Congressional Appropriators to simply "follow LIHEAP's enabling law" -the precise allocation formula actually prescribed by Congress. Florida and many other states in great need would see a meaningful increase in their share of LIHEAP funds, as the Program's enabling law calibrates for the dangers of both extreme heat and cold. It also adjusts funding for changing energy costs, demographics and poverty. In fact, the Congressional Research Service's latest (June 25, 2015) estimate confirmed that Florida would receive an additional \$38.5 million in LIHEAP funding - a 55 percent improvement - if appropriations were to simply adhere to LIHEAP's lawfully-enacted enabling law, even if the Program were simply to be level funded;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE PALM BEACH COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC. THAT:

Section 1: The Board of Directors for the Palm Beach County League of Cities, Inc., strongly urges the Appropriations Committee of the United States Senate and House of Representatives to both fully follow LIHEAP's enabling law when determining all future appropriations, and to restore LIHEAP funding to its historic levels.

Section 2: The Board of Directors hereby requests that this Resolution be sent to Governor Rick Scott, U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, U.S. Congressman Brian Mast, U.S. Congressman Alcee L. Hastings, U.S. Congresswoman Lois Frankel, U.S. Congressman Ted Deutch, and the members of the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation, and further requests their support for continued and fair funding for this life-saving Program.

Section 3: This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by Board of Directors.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 22nd day of February, 2017.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE PALM BEACH COUNTY
LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.

Robert M.W. Shalhoub, President

(SEAL)

ATTEST:

Mo Thornton, Secretary/Treasurer