

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 24-145—sHB 5426

Human Services Committee

**AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY ASSISTANCE STUDIES AND FUEL
VENDOR REIMBURSEMENT**

SUMMARY: This act requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner to set new pricing standards for deliverable fuel for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), starting with the program period beginning November 1, 2025. The standards must fairly compensate fuel vendors for costs incurred in fuel purchase and delivery while also maintaining the maximum funding amount for benefit recipients. It also requires the commissioner to include these pricing standards in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program's (LIHEAP) annual report starting August 1, 2025. (LIHEAP is the federal block grant that funds CEAP.)

The act also requires DSS to convene a working group to study best practices used in energy assistance programs in other states to fairly compensate deliverable fuel vendors while maintaining the maximum amount of funding to benefit recipients. The working group must report its study to the Appropriations, Energy and Technology, and Human Services committees by January 31, 2025.

Lastly, the act requires DSS, in consultation with the Low-Income Energy Advisory Board, to study the feasibility of developing a common application and benefit portal for applicants for LIHEAP and Operation Fuel benefits. DSS must report its findings, including the portals costs and benefits, to the Energy and Technology and Human Services committees by July 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024, except the working group and study requirements are effective upon passage.

FUEL VENDOR WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Under the act, DSS's fuel vendor working group includes the following members:

1. a member of a deliverable fuel vendor organization;
2. a representative from a community action agency that contracts with DSS to administer LIHEAP-funded energy assistance;
3. a Department of Administrative Services representative;
4. a person representing CEAP recipients' interests and financial concerns;
and
5. an Office of Consumer Counsel representative.

BACKGROUND

Related Act

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

PA 24-37 redesignates the “Low Income Energy Advisory Board” as the “Low-Income Energy and Water Advisory Board” and broadens the board’s duties.