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SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

EXHIBIT NO. 1

DATE: 3-14-05

BILL NO. HB 332

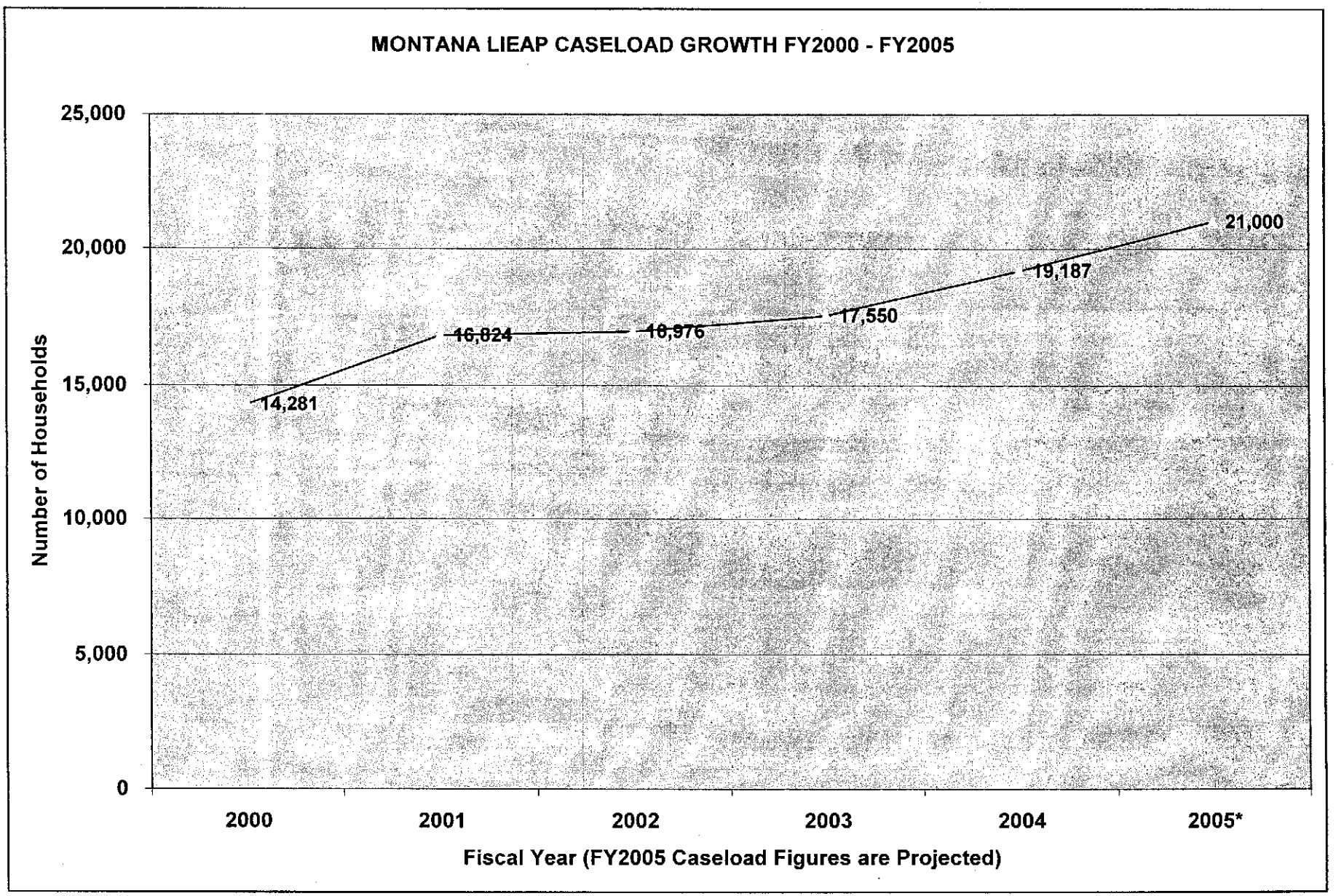
SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR HB332

PRESENTED TO THE SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

March 14, 2005

PY 2004 LIEAP - HOUSEHOLDS APPROVED BY COUNTY

Eligibility Unit	County	Households Approved
Action for Eastern Montana	CARTER	16
	CUSTER	207
	DANIELS	22
	DAWSON	161
	FALLON	24
	GARFIELD	12
	MCCONE	27
	PHILLIPS	103
	P. RIVER	21
	PRAIRIE	32
	RICHLAND	157
	ROOSEVELT	52
	ROSEBUD	66
	SHERIDAN	75
	TREASURE	13
	VALLEY	105
	WIBAUX	16
	TOTAL	1,106
District IV HRDC	BLAINE	131
	HILL	520
	LIBERTY	23
	TOTAL	674
Opportunities Incorporated	CASCADE	1,492
	CHOUTEAU	105
	GLACIER	112
	TOTAL	1,708
District VI HRDC	FERGUS	263
	G. VALLEY	25
	J. BASIN	47
	MUSSELSHELL	182
	PETROLEUM	12
	WHEATLAND	53
	TOTAL	582
District VII HRDC	BIGHORN	489
	CARBON	158
	STILLWATER	97
	SWEET GRASS	51
	YELLOWSTONE	2,506
	TOTAL	3,301
Rocky Mountain Development Council	BROADWATER	157
	JEFFERSON	216
	LEWIS & CLARK	1,545
	TOTAL	1,919
District IX HRDC	GALLATIN	738
	MEAGHER	70
	PARK	346
	TOTAL	1,153
North Western Montana Human Resources	FLATHEAD	1,280
	LAKE	457
	LINCOLN	882
	SANDERS	280
	TOTAL	2,899
District XI HRC	MINERAL	188
	MISSOULA	1,979
	RAVALLI	802
	TOTAL	2,968
District XII HRC	BEAVERHEAD	219
	DEER LODGE	339
	GRANITE	87
	MADISON	122
	POWELL	178
	SILVER BOW	1,548
	TOTAL	2,493
North Central Area Agency on Aging	PONDERA	161
	TETON	135
	TOOLE	87
	TOTAL	383
Statewide Total		19,187


MONTANA LIEAP CASELOAD GROWTH FY2000 - FY2005
25,000
20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
0
Number of Households
14,281
16,824
16,976
17,550
19,187
21,000
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005*
Fiscal Year (FY2005 Caseload Figures are Projected)

THE NEED FOR LOW-INCOME ENERGY PROGRAMS

- One of the Department's primary objectives in administering the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program is to ensure that the home heating energy burden shouldered by low-income Montanans is comparable to that of other income groups in the state.

- Data from the Department of Energy and the 1990 Census indicate the average home heating energy burden for all Montana families was approximately 4.1% of household income. Data from last year's LIEAP households indicate the average home heating energy burden for Montana's low-income families was approximately 12.8%. At 2003-2004 caseload and funding levels, provision of LIEAP reduced the heating costs for participating households to 6.8% of income.

- In today's dollars, the expense to cost-effectively weatherize all of approximately 17,211 of last year's LIEAP households whose heating burdens, at this winter's fuel prices, exceed 4.1% would be approximately $51,633,000. To weatherize all of approximately 76,664 potentially eligible low-income households (LIEAP and non-LIEAP combined) whose heating burdens exceed 4.1%, it would cost approximately $229,991,805.

- The Weatherization Assistance Program has reduced the annual energy costs of recipient households by approximately 21 percent. FY 2005 funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program is $7,383,574. This funding will weatherize approximately 2,019 homes.

- At today's energy prices, the heating costs of participating LIEAP households are $21,522,900 per year. Based on these figures, the heating costs of all Montana's 90,789 low-income households are $87,974,541.

- Funding for this winter's LIEAP, provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is $12.782 million.

DPHHS LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SUMMARY

- The Low Income Energy Assistance program (LIEAP) pays a portion of eligible households' winter heating costs. In most cases, payments are made directly from the State to utility companies and fuel vendors.

- Eligibility is limited to those at or below 150 percent of federal poverty guidelines. For this year, a family of four can earn no more than $28,275.

- Last winter benefit payments ranged from a low of $68 to a high of $1,855 depending on household income, fuel type, fuel costs, local climate, type of dwelling and size of dwelling. The average benefit payment was $465.

- This winter, benefit payments will range from $58 to $1,648 depending on household income, fuel type, fuel costs, local climate, type of dwelling and size of dwelling. The average benefit payment will be $432.

- Of the 19,187 homes served by last winter's program 5,340 were occupied by senior citizens; disabled individuals occupied 7,549 and 12,622 contained a female head of household. This year the Department anticipates serving 21,000 households.

- The program, operated by ten private non-profit Human Resource Development Councils and one Area Agency on Aging, distinguishes itself from other public assistance programs by providing services to a significant number of households not receiving Food Stamps, FAIM or SSI income.

- In addition to heating bill assistance, eligible households may, through their application for LIEAP, receive NorthWestern Energy or federally funded weatherization assistance.

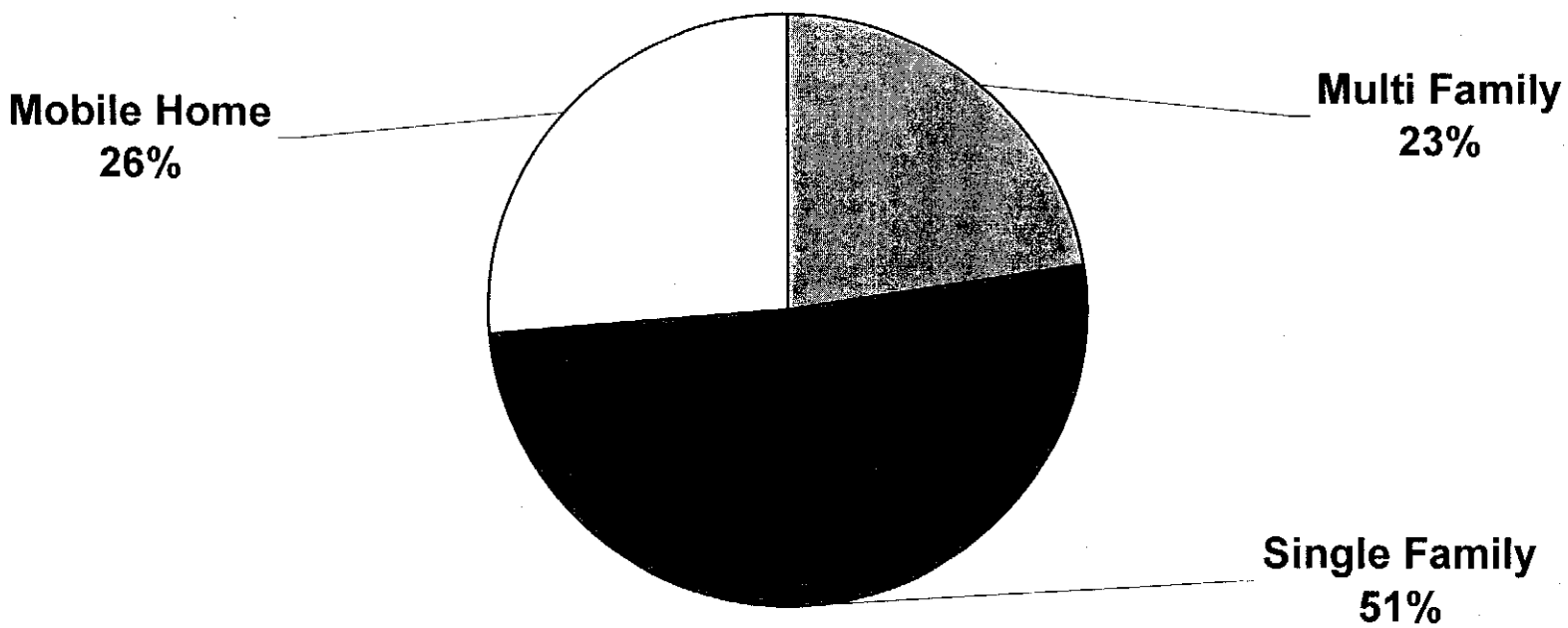
- NorthWestern Energy assists low-income Montanans by providing its LIEAP customers an additional twenty-five percent discount on their annual natural gas and electric bills. Great Falls Gas – Energy West Company and Montana Dakota Utilities provide their LIEAP customers energy bill discounts averaging fifteen and thirteen percent respectively.

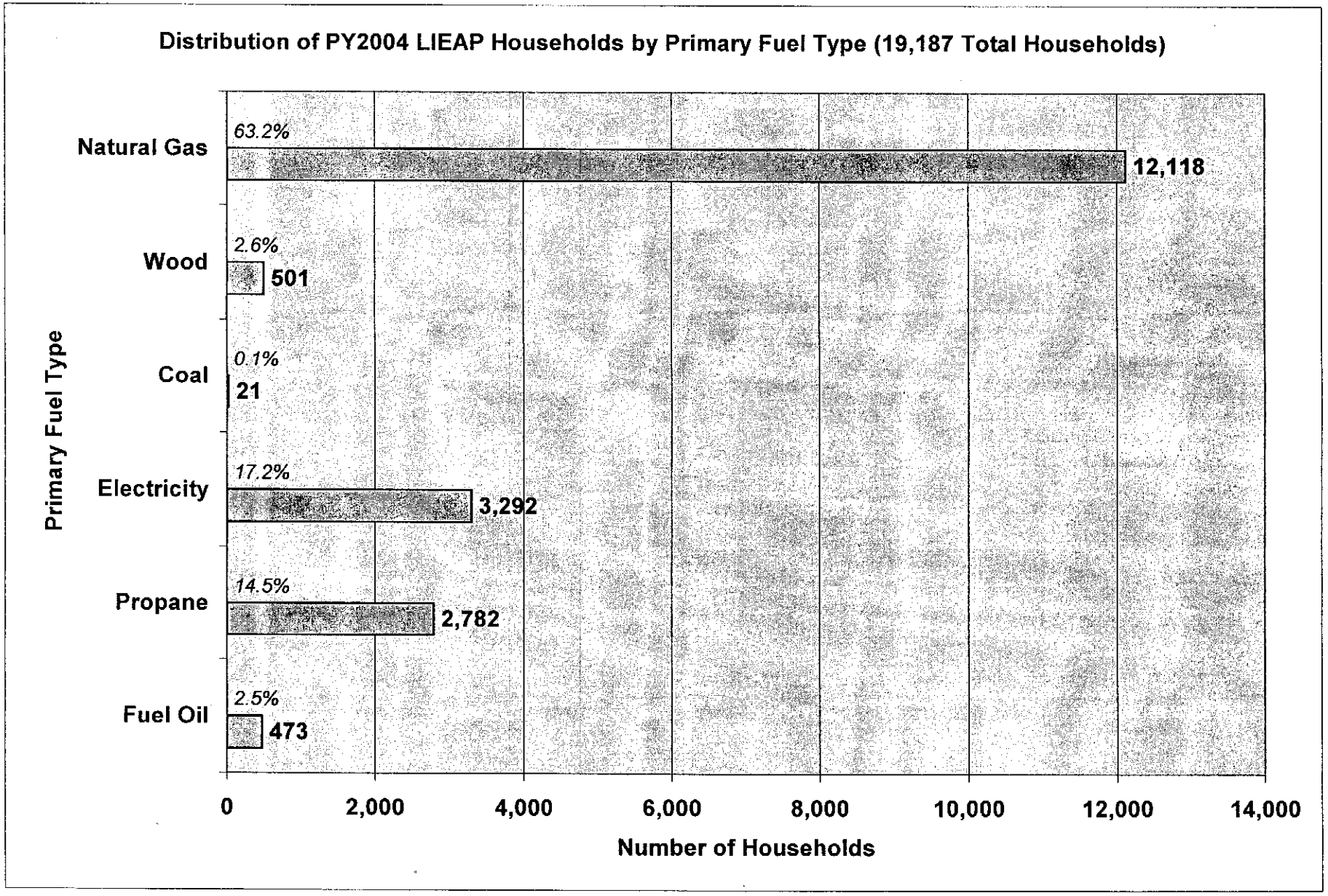
- The Human Resource Development Councils use the LIEAP application process as an intake and referral mechanism for a multitude of other services provided locally on behalf of state and federal government and the private sector.

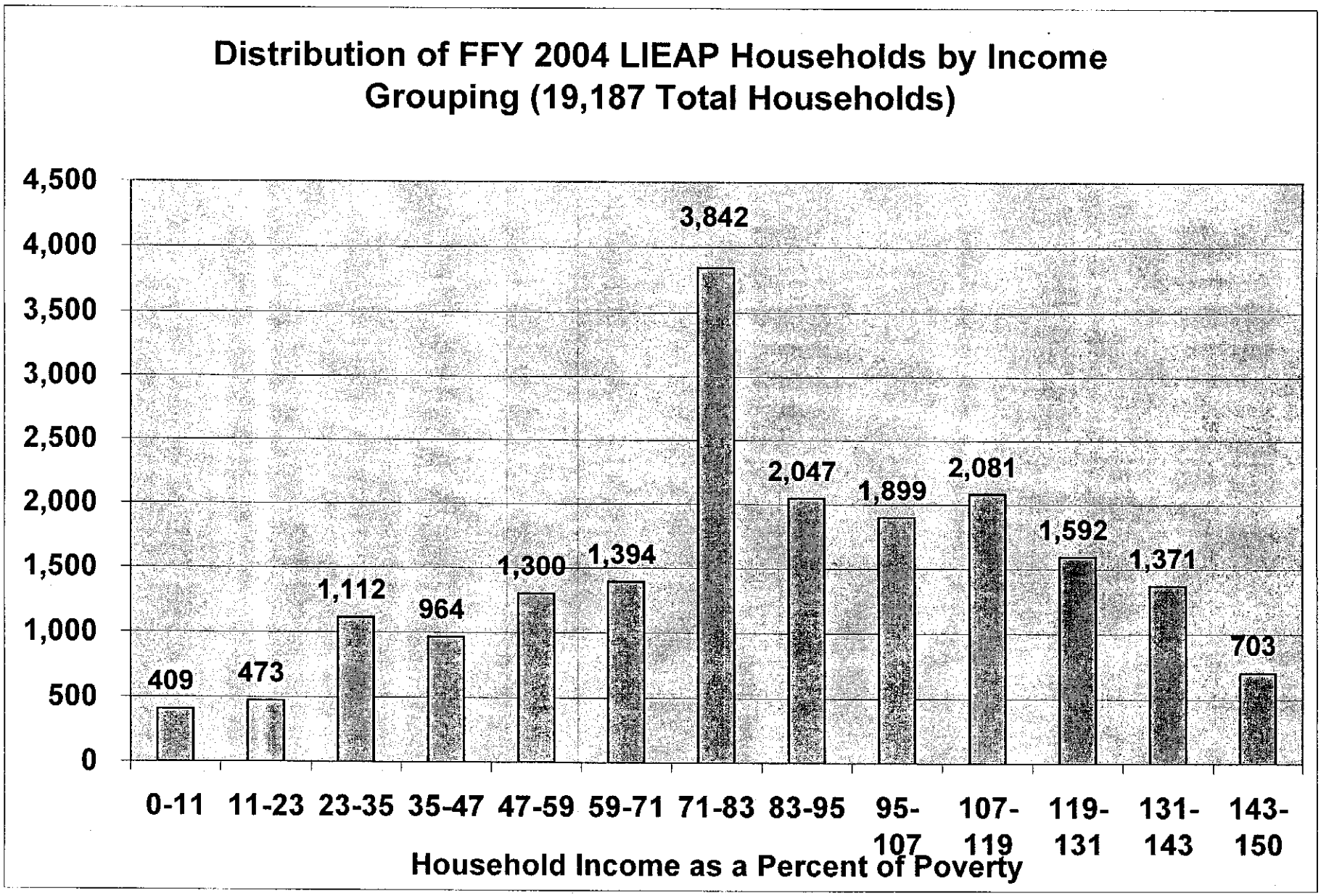
- DPHHS utilizes 2.38 full time equivalent employees to administer the program. The State's primary function is to ensure compliance with federal law and uniform cost effective service throughout Montana.

- This year's funding for LIEAP, provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is $12.782 million.

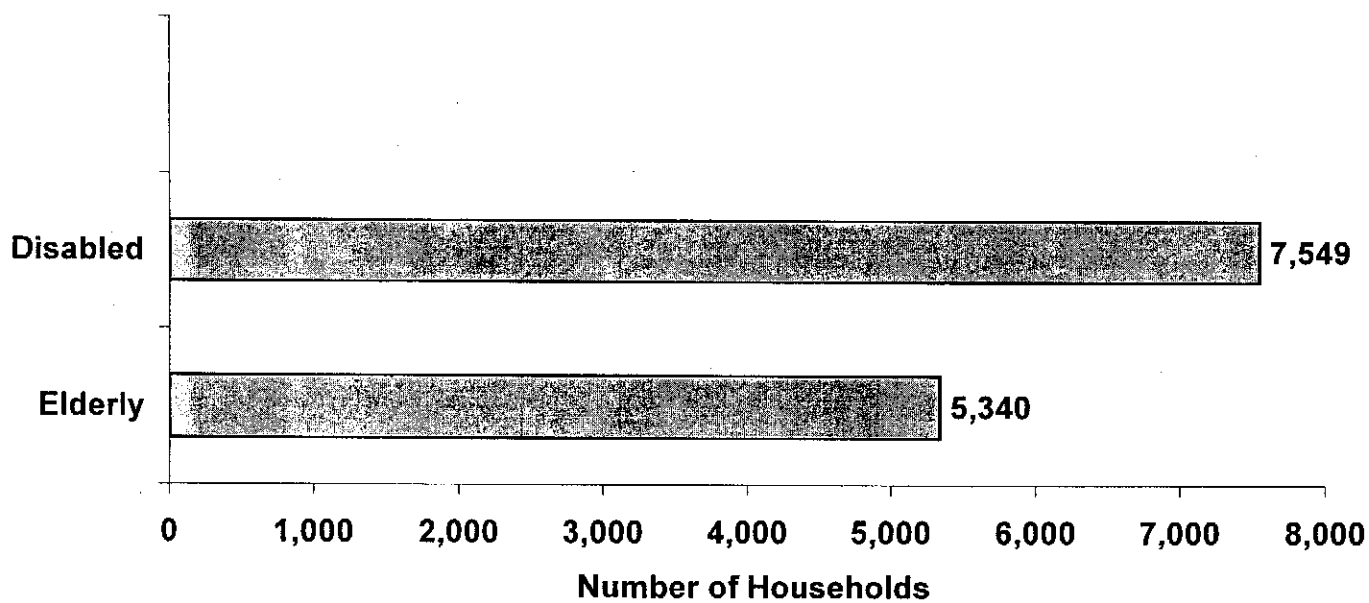
Distribution of PY2004 LIEAP Households by Dwelling Type (19,187 Total Households)




Distribution of PY2004 LIEAP Households by Primary Fuel Type (19,187 Total Households)
Primary Fuel Type
Natural Gas
63.2%
12,118
Wood
2.6%
501
Coal
0.1%
21
Electricity
17.2%
3,292
Propane
14.5%
2,782
Fuel Oil
2.5%
473
0
2,000
4,000
6,000
8,000
10,000
12,000
14,000
Number of Households


Distribution of FFY 2004 LIEAP Households by Income Grouping (19,187 Total Households)
4,500
4,000
3,500
3,000
2,500
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
409
473
1,112
964
1,300
1,394
3,842
2,047
1,899
2,081
1,592
1,371
703
0-11
11-23
23-35
35-47
47-59
59-71
71-83
83-95
95-107
107-119
119-131
131-143
143-150
Household Income as a Percent of Poverty

LIEAP Households Reporting Elderly/Disabled Members: FFY2004 LIEAP Households (19,187 Total Households)



Blackfeet Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
P.O. Box 850
Browning, MT 59417
(406) 338-7977 Fax (406) 338-5163

3/11/05

Mr. Jim Nolan
Montana Dept. of Public Health & Human Services
P.O. Box 202956
Helena, MT 59620-2956

Dear Jim,

As Director of the Blackfeet Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, I send this letter in support of HB 332, Supplemental Funds for LIEAP. Since I am not able to travel to Helena on 3/14/05 you may submit this letter as testimony on my behalf.

This LIHEAP program serves Native American households on the Blackfeet Reservation with home heating assistance. We share your agency's concerns about helping low income families afford their heating costs. We understand the desperate situations that these people have to handle when there is no money or job available. Our reservation has an unemployment rate of 60 %, therefore many families would have been at risk if there were no LIHEAP Program when the extreme cold we experienced last month settled on us.

This supplemental funding would benefit the clients tremendously. The increase in fuel costs and the large number of members moving home have resulted in our program serving 15% more households than usual. The extreme cold we experienced last month depleted all home heating payments made previously by BLIHEAP. Many households need these additional funds just to make it through the remainder of the winter season.

I appreciate any consideration my letter is given. I ask that HB 332 be passed.

Sincerely,

Vicki Connelly

Vicki Connelly, Director
Blackfeet Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

March 14, 2005

TO: Montana Senate Committee

FR: Newta Manley, Coordinator NM
NORTHERN CHEYENNE LIHEAP
Lame Deer, Mt. 59043

Our reservation has a very high unemployment rate and we are in dire need of assistance. The weather is so unpredictable; we still need to help the households with the heating costs. The propane is really high and the electricity is going up. Some of the households have to supplement their heat with wood to stretch propane or electricity costs.

This year we serviced 324 households and have 231 not served due the exhaustion of funds. We would appreciate to get the Supplement funds from the State. This was a great help to the households that did not get assistance.

Your consideration will be greatly appreciated.

Rx Date/Time MAR-14-2005(MON) 11:45 P.002

FORT PECK TRIBES

Assiniboine & Sioux

March 14, 2005

Senate Public Health, Welfare & Safety Committee
Helena, Montana

Dear Members:

Please consider this letter as a demonstration of our utmost support for House Bill 332, which will provide additional funds for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance program activities.

Any additional funds that the low-income households can receive are greatly needed. The huge increase in the cost of all types of home energy and the limited funds that we have had available this year, have made this bill very important to the low-income households on the Fort Peck reservation and also all low-income households through-out Montana.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Clarence Macdonald

Clarence Macdonald,
Director
Community Services Program

Poplar, Montana 59255 P.O. Box 1027 (406) 768-5155

03/14/2005 12:32 FAX 002
Rx Date/Time MAR-14-2005(MON) 11:33 P.002