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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5717**

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**State of Washington**

**57th Legislature**

**2001 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Brown, T. Sheldon, Fraser, Regala, Kline, Franklin, Winsley, Kohl-Welles, Shin, McAuliffe, Spanel, Costa, B. Sheldon and Rasmussen)

READ FIRST TIME 1/02/01.

1 AN ACT Relating to the low-income energy assistance program;  
2 creating a new section; making appropriations; and declaring an  
3 emergency.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that:

6 (1) The state is experiencing dramatic increases in the costs of  
7 electricity and natural gas, with increases averaging between thirty  
8 and seventy percent, as a result of many factors out of the state's  
9 direct control.

10 (2) These unprecedented price increases have a disproportionate  
11 impact on the low-income citizens of the state because energy costs  
12 comprise a larger percentage of their available resources than families  
13 with moderate and higher incomes and approximately seventy-five percent  
14 of low-income homes use electric heat.

15 (3) Every year, the state's low-income energy assistance program  
16 exhausts its resources before the end of the heating season.  
17 Typically, only seventeen percent of the eligible population is served  
18 in an average year.

1 (4) Requests for assistance are expected to increase by over forty  
2 percent this winter, and the amount of heating assistance each  
3 household will need will also rise.

4 (5) While the state has received emergency allocations from the  
5 federal government, the combined circumstances of increased need for  
6 help and the increased cost of energy make it likely that, even with  
7 the emergency federal assistance, fewer citizens will be served.

8 The legislature therefore intends to provide immediate assistance  
9 to help mitigate the adverse consequences of this winter's rate  
10 increases on Washington's low-income citizens.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The sum of two million dollars, or as  
12 much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated from the general  
13 fund--state to the department of community, trade, and economic  
14 development for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, for energy  
15 assistance under the low-income home energy assistance program.

16 (2) The sum of four million dollars, or as much thereof as may be  
17 necessary, is appropriated from the general fund--federal to the  
18 department of community, trade, and economic development for the fiscal  
19 year ending June 30, 2001, for energy assistance under the low-income  
20 home energy assistance program.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
22 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the  
23 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect  
24 immediately.

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