

Why Write to Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson on the Financial Issues Being Faced by Local Heating Oil Retailers and Their Customers?

- One of the purposes of the Economic Emergency Stabilization Act, passed by Congress in September, is to allow the Treasury to relieve the financial community of some of their nonperforming assets in order to free up capital for lending. The banking system was - and is - under severe capitalization pressures, and the capital markets for lending are locked up.
- Capital markets being locked up means lending to small businesses and consumers shuts down or gets very difficult and the fact is the \$700 billion Congress appropriated that is designed to free up lending hasn't reached Main Street yet.
- We are the face of Main Street, local businesspeople who live in the communities where we work. Wall Street speculators drove energy prices through the roof this spring and early summer - predicting \$200 a barrel crude oil and \$5 or \$6 a gallon heating oil. Consumers came to us in great numbers and demanded protection. Our companies had to lock in very expensive wholesale supply in order to meet that consumer demand. Prices have fallen 55% since mid-July, but not for those retailers and consumers who locked in their supply.
- The Senate Banking Committee says "The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (EESA) provides up to \$700 billion to the Secretary of the Treasury to buy mortgages and other assets that are clogging the balance sheets of financial institutions and making it difficult for working families, small businesses, and other companies to access credit, which is vital to a strong and stable economy."
- We are among those small businesses having difficulty accessing credit.
- Despite the actions of Congress and the Treasury, many fuel companies still do not have access to the capital we need to *borrow* in order to maintain our businesses and serve our consumers.
- These small businessmen and women are not asking for a bail out or a hand out. They want to borrow money and pay it back. We simply want the system to work as Congress intended - to free up commercial and consumer lending. This is the point of Emergency Economic Stabilization Act.

- \$1.3 trillion of our tax money later - the mess created by Wall Street and financial institutions have left us further in debt and left out consumers and small businesses who need to borrow - and pay it back. Senator Dodd addressed this in his press conference of November 6th on the Finance Committee's agenda for next year when he said the financial system bailout wasn't for healthy banks to buy healthy banks or pay bonuses to executives - it was about freeing up capital to be lent to small businesses and consumers. It isn't happening yet and we want the Treasury Secretary to know that for all of the attention to Wall Street, banks and big businesses that the engine that drives this economy are small businesses and the 95% of the nation's workforce small businesses represent. Who is speaking for us and our customers?

We are.