

Statement from Governor Dayton Regarding Propane Emergency

January 30, 2014

This afternoon, Governor Mark Dayton and several other Midwest Governors spoke with Texas Governor Rick Perry via telephone about the propane emergency in Minnesota. Last Thursday, January 23rd, Governor Perry waived trucking restrictions in the State of Texas, which increased the flow of propane to Minnesota and other states. That waiver was set to expire on Wednesday, February 5th. Governor Dayton thanked Governor Perry today for his previous assistance, and asked him to extend that waiver when it expires next week.

Following the call, Governor Dayton said: **“I told Governor Perry how important his previous waiver had been to Minnesotans, who are suffering severely from this propane crisis. He very graciously agreed to extend the waiver when it expires next week.”**

Steps Taken to Relieve the Propane Shortage

Propane Shortage Hotline – Today, the State of Minnesota [established a toll-free hotline](#) that Minnesotans affected by the propane shortage can use to ask questions or seek assistance in this time of emergency. Minnesotans with questions about the current propane situation or who are in danger of running out of heating fuel should call (800) 657-3504 in Greater Minnesota, or (651) 297-1304 in the Twin Cities. The hotline will operate Monday through Friday, from 9:00am to 4:30pm.

Emergency Executive Order – On Monday of this week, Governor Dayton issued [Emergency Executive Order 14-02](#), declaring a Peacetime State of Emergency in Minnesota in response to a severe shortage of propane and home heating fuels statewide. The Governor has [called an emergency meeting of the state’s Executive Council](#) on Friday to consider extending that state of emergency for up to 30 days.

Protecting Consumers from Price Gouging – The Governor has also directed the Commissioner of Commerce to use his consumer protection authority [to help guard Minnesotans from potential price gouging activities](#). On Wednesday, January 29, Commissioner Mike Rothman sent a letter to the propane industry concerning skyrocketing prices. It stated that he will take all necessary steps to protect consumers from potential price gouging and unlawful market manipulation. Consumers who believe they may have been the victim of price gouging are encouraged to contact the Minnesota Department of Commerce's Consumer Help Line at (651) 539-1500 or toll-free at (800) 657-3602.

Additional Financial Assistance for Consumers – Consumers who need financial assistance to pay their heating bills may also qualify for help through the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The Minnesota Department of Commerce recently announced that LIHEAP crisis payments would increase from \$500 to \$1,000 for applicants who heat their homes with propane and heating oil. Qualifying families must apply for assistance at the local service provider in their area; Minnesota has 32

local service providers. A list of local service providers and information on applying for assistance is available [on the Minnesota Department of Commerce website](#) or by calling 1-800-657-3710.

Working to Increase Propane Supplies – This week, Governor Dayton met with propane industry officials to identify immediate steps that can be taken to help resolve the propane supply and price issues. The meeting included Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson, Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman, and state legislators. The Governor [also joined Minnesota’s Congressional Delegation in petitioning President Obama](#) to knock down regulatory barriers, take additional steps to alleviate the shortage, and provide expanded relief to families and agriculture producers.

Other National and Federal Measures – The American Railway Association has asked its 175 members to prioritize propane delivery by making cars available and dropping propane shipments at necessary locations. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Transportation has established a regional emergency declaration suspending the regulatory provisions pertaining to hours of service for drivers of commercial motor vehicles transporting propane to affected Midwestern states.