December 18, 2015

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We urge you to support two key energy programs, the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and the State Energy Program (SEP), as you finalize your Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 budget proposal. Specifically, we are writing to ensure that your budget request provides strong funding for SEP and restores WAP to pre-Recovery Act levels.

Many low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities have used WAP to make lasting and cost-effective energy efficiency improvements to their homes. WAP has helped to reduce the burden of high energy prices for more than three decades. According to the Department of Energy, to date, more than 7.4 million homes have been weatherized. Weatherization saves low-income families an average of $250 to $450 per year in heating, cooling, and electric costs, depending on their housing type, location, and fuel source.

WAP also supports thousands of high quality jobs. The National Association of State Community Services Programs estimates there are around 8,000 highly skilled jobs in the weatherization network, with countless more supplied in related U.S. businesses, including materials suppliers, vendors, and manufacturers that make more than 90 percent of the products used in weatherization. WAP has helped the construction industry and given a boost to U.S. manufacturers and small businesses during challenging economic times.

In addition, electric and gas utilities in many states depend on the WAP delivery network to carry out low-income residential efficiency initiatives, leveraging scarce resources and measurably increasing the effect of WAP in these states. As the program's funding has declined in recent years, both the state-level and private sector programs that rely on the WAP network and infrastructure have been impaired.

The State Energy Program also has a history of success working across all sectors of the economy and supplying cost-effective energy efficiency improvements. The last comprehensive study of the program by Oak Ridge National Lab showed that each federal dollar invested in SEP is leveraged by nearly $1 in state and private funds and results in more than $4.10 in annual energy savings. The SEP-supported projects and programs include a wide-range of activities, such as school energy efficiency programs, energy efficiency financing activities, industrial and commercial programs, agricultural projects, and energy efficiency programs for homeowners.

We recognize the ongoing challenges facing the discretionary budget and urge you to prioritize WAP and SEP, two well established, cost-effective programs that supply jobs,
contribute to the nation’s economy, and help meet important goals like improving energy efficiency and lowering energy costs.

We look forward to working with you to ensure adequate resources to maintain effective WAP and SEP programs. Thank you for your attention to and consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Susan Collins
United States Senator

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Chris Coons
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator
Mark Warner
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Angus King Jr.
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Michael Bennet
United States Senator

Charles Schumer
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Chris Murphy
United States Senator

Gary Peters
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator