

**Testimony of Hal Cohen, Central Vermont Community Action Council
February 18, 2014**

Please support continued funding of the Weatherization Assistance Programs (WAPs) at least at the \$12 million level. Our current shortfall is \$2 million.

Low Income Weatherization is a Smart Investment for Vermont.

- Homes that are weatherized see an average of 37% energy savings.
- For every dollar invested in weatherization, \$2.51 is returned to the (household and the community).
- The Weatherization Assistance Program employs 150 people state (wide).
- The Weatherization Assistance Program is considered to be efficient (and effective. It is overseen by the Office of Economic Opportunity and has accountability measures built into the program. (*Vermont has set a bold thermal efficiency goal, and we must reach it.*)
- Vermont has set a goal to improve the energy fitness of 25% of the state's housing stock by 2020. The Weatherization Assistance Program is an important component of the state's work toward that goal.
- In order to reach the state's goal, increased funding is needed, as over 14,000 low-income units still need to be weatherized.

We must reach our goal:

- In 2011 Vermont ranked 50th in the US in energy affordability. □
- Low income families spend significantly more of their incomes for home energy than higher income families. □
- Vermont has the second oldest housing stock in the nation.

Weatherization provides long-term benefits:

- When a home is weatherized, the savings for the household are not only in the first year, but every year after.
- Reducing heating costs for low income households can reduce the need for LIHEAP assistance for these families. The Low Income Weatherization program prioritizes LIHEAP recipients for services.

Weatherization provides warmth and comfort – and other benefits, too!

- Families report that weatherization helps to make their homes warmer and more affordable, which means they can focus their resources on other basic needs.
- Weatherization workers are trained to refer clients to other services so that families benefit from having these workers interact with them.
- Weatherization workers provide energy coaching so families can take responsibility for continuing to lower their energy consumption.
- Senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and families with young children receive priority for weatherization assistance.