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Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2017 3:25 PM
To: Theresa Utton
Subject: Testimony in support of HEAT Squad appropriations

Testimony in support of appropriations to the HEAT Squad

I support the request for yearly state appropriations of \$250,000 starting in 2018 to help continue the valuable HEAT Squad services and to expand it statewide. The HEAT Squad currently serves Addison, Rutland, Bennington, Windham, and Windsor counties and needs to be made available statewide. This program saves money on energy bills and provides other benefits by making homes safer, healthier, and more comfortable. Another benefit of the appropriation is to the state's economy by helping retain existing employees and create new jobs.

The HEAT Squad program is open to all income levels, but is vital for the middle and lower income ranges, who make up 60% of HEAT Squad customers. As income declines, a family's relative energy cost burden increases.

I am a member of the Neighborworks of Western Vermont board of directors. I speak both from that perspective, and as a HEAT Squad customer that has experienced energy cost savings and comfort and safety improvements at two homes. In both cases I was very satisfied with the HEAT Squad performance. Since that experience, I have seen over recent years as a board member that the HEAT Squad program has improved its services and capabilities. Such services are comprehensive and include new technology such as heat pumps and improved software.

I have testified at legislative committees on Vermont energy issues, particularly renewable energy. I have retired from a career in the electric utility industry. In my opinion, state appropriations to the Heat Squad, a unique entity that increases energy efficiency for Vermonters, are the most effective use of state funds in the energy sector.

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