

Statement to VT House and Senate Committee on Appropriations

On behalf of the HEAT Squad

Rutland Longfellow School, 2-25-2019

Good Evening. My name is Bob Amelang. I'm a Board member of Neighborworks of Western VT, under which the HEAT Squad exists. I support the HEAT Squad request for \$1.25 million, either spread out over 5 years or all at once.

An investment in the HEAT Squad will have two benefits: First, it will improve the lives and finances of Vermonters, with a side effect of creating local jobs. Second, the investment will achieve CO2 reductions, which is a legislative goal.

The \$1.25 million would expand the HEAT Squad statewide. Since it was established in 2010, the HEAT Squad has proven itself: over 4,100 energy audits resulting in actual energy retrofit projects for 1,500 homes. Savings are \$900 per home annually. Economic benefits include 62 energy related jobs.

The HEAT Squad has also added new services since inception in 2010. Energy audits now include inspection work for health-related home conditions. That includes review of access for home dwellers with limited mobility and air quality for those with breathing problems. The HEAT Squad helps homeowners with obtaining funds: e.g. \$830,000 from Efficiency VT rebates and low interest loans for weatherization.

The requested funds will help meet the legislative goal of carbon reduction. While there has been a lot of push back for carbon tax measures, there are positive impacts from carbon reductions resulting from a statewide HEAT Squad: better comfort, health and safety; and economic benefits.

I worked many years as an engineer for CVPS, in the same department that worked with state regulators in the 1990s to achieve energy savings as an alternative to building those dirty old generating plants. This ended in the establishment of Efficiency VT. In like fashion, the HEAT Squad promotes energy savings. I think that rather than debating a carbon tax again, it's better to promote programs that save energy, especially a proven and effective one like the HEAT Squad.

Thank you.