

February 20, 2019

Dear Chair Stevens,

As organizations dedicated to cutting Vermont's carbon pollution, growing Vermont's economy, and ensuring that all Vermonters have the opportunity to be part of the transition to clean energy and efficiency, **we are writing to ask that the House Committee on General, Housing, & Military Affairs support funding for substantially increased weatherization work**, specifically targeted to help Vermonters who are low and moderate income, and a recommendation of Gov. Phil Scott's Climate Action Commission.

Weatherizing our homes and businesses is an urgent need for our economy, affordability, and our climate. Weatherization creates jobs, saves Vermonters millions of dollars every year, makes homes healthier and more comfortable, and is a foundation of our state's comprehensive energy plan. Moreover, Vermont has a statutory goal of weatherizing 80,000 housing units by 2020 – a goal we are nowhere near meeting.

The governor's Climate Action Commission recommended that we double funding for the Low Income Weatherization Program run by the Community Action Agencies, currently set at approximately \$9.5 million annually. Our coalition proposes a similar but broader goal – doubling the number of homes of Vermonters who are low or moderate income weatherized each year from 2,000 to 4,000 homes, starting next year. By dedicating a portion of the increased revenue to moderate income Vermonters who do not need the full subsidy the Low Income Weatherization Program provides, these dollars can be stretched further, serving more Vermont families and increasing the expansion's economic and climate benefits in the process. At the same time, doing so will fill a critical gap in the weatherization services currently available.

Vermonters between 80% and 120% of median income are ineligible for the Low Income Weatherization Program (and would be unable to be served in any case due to funding constraints), and are also unlikely to be able to weatherize their homes solely with the modest incentives Efficiency Vermont is able to make available.

By increasing funding and putting a portion of the additional revenue into Low Income Weatherization while also dedicating a portion to efficiency programs that serve moderate income Vermonters, the legislature can deliver an effective combination of climate, economic, and social benefits.

As such, **we ask that the Committee on General, Housing, & Military Affairs recommend to the House Committee on Ways and Means** that they:

Re-authorize the existing revenue sources for the Home Weatherization Assistance Program for households up to 80% of median income.

Increase funding for low and moderate income weatherization by increasing the fuel tax on heating oil, propane, kerosene, and other covered fossil fuels 2 cents in FY20 and an additional 2

cents in FY21, and the gross receipts tax on natural gas and coal by .75% in FY20 and an additional .75% in FY21.

We also ask that the Committee recommend to the House Committee on Appropriations that this additional funding be directed to both low and moderate income weatherization as described in the attached proposal.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Audubon Vermont
Capstone Community Action
Conservation Law Foundation
NeighborWorks of Western Vermont
Toxics Action Center
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility
Vermont Chapter of the Sierra Club
Vermont Climate & Health Alliance
Vermont Conservation Voters
Vermont Natural Resources Defense Council
Vermont Public Interest Research Group
Vermont Youth Lobby
Vermonters for a New Economy