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Arizona Corporation Commission

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Kristin K. Mayes, Chair  
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Phoenix, AZ 85007-2996

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION  
DOCKET CONTROL

DOCKETED BY 

RE: Docket No. E-01345A-08-0172, Decision No. 71866—Energy Efficiency/Weatherization

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of the Community Action Weatherization providers, and on behalf of the low-income residents of Arizona, we are writing to you today to request that additional funds be allocated to the APS weatherization program to allow for minor repairs that otherwise render a home ineligible for energy efficient weatherization measures.

The Community Action weatherization providers, in partnership with the Arizona Department of Commerce Energy Office request and additional \$1,620,000 be provided to fund a minor repair program to help ensure that these dwellings receive the beneficial weatherization measures that will help low-income energy consumers achieve a more energy efficient home, reduce their energy consumption, lower their monthly bills and stay in their homes.

There are too many occasions when a weatherization audit is conducted and a crew must "walk away" from the home because it needs some minor repairs that are not authorized under the weatherization program guidelines and for which the provider agencies have essentially no resources. These conditions require a provider agency to "walk away" from a home that would otherwise qualify for the weatherization program.

Conditions or situations that prevent a service provider from weatherizing a home include, but are not limited to: electrical repairs, roof repairs, leaky faucets, the presence of harmful pesticide residue, hazardous pest/insect infestation, a malfunctioning combustion appliance, moisture problems, and other minor repairs that do not fit the prioritized weatherization program guidelines established by the Department of Commerce Energy Office. Few agencies have resources to cover these minor repairs and end up "walking away" from these homes that would benefit most if weatherization measures could be installed. As stated above, agencies are reporting that these homes are typically the poorest quality buildings whose owners and renters face disproportional energy costs.

A survey recently conducted by Arizona Community Action Association (ACAA) of the ten Community Action Agency Weatherization Assistance Programs serving Arizona's low-income households revealed that more than 30 homes each month statewide, or 360 homes each year, are denied weatherization services because of minor repairs needed to bring the dwelling up to code. Agencies estimate the

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average cost, per household, to complete these minor repairs and prevent the "walk away" is \$4,500. The average cost to weatherize a home, using a variety of funding sources, is approximately \$8,000.

Weatherizing a home makes it more energy efficient so that less energy is consumed in heating or cooling, and every home that is approved for the weatherization program undergoes an extensive home energy audit by skilled weatherization crews using advanced diagnostic equipment, such as the blower door, and manometer, to determine the most cost-effective measures appropriate for each home.

Weatherizing a home ensures lower energy consumption and as well as lower utility bills. Many low-income households lack the resources to make their home more energy efficient and spend a large percentage of their income on high energy costs. Depending on their income, low-income households in Arizona spend between 17% - 40% of their total annual income on energy often cutting back on other necessities, such as food and medication, to pay their energy bills. Most Arizona households spend only 4%, on average, of their annual income on energy. Though more than 24,000 of Arizona's low-income households have been provided with weatherization assistance services since the inception of the WAP program in 1977, estimates by the Arizona Department of Commerce Energy Office indicate that half a million homes in Arizona are eligible for weatherization.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, Weatherization is a cost-effective investment of taxpayer dollars. For every \$1 invested in the Program, Weatherization returns \$2.51 to the household and society. This includes:

- \$1.80 returned in reduced energy bills
- \$0.71 is returned to ratepayers, households, and communities through increased local employment, reduced uncollectible utility bills, improved housing quality, and better health and safety through the reduction of heat-related illness and death and risk of death from home fires due to utility disconnection.

The impact of weatherization goes far beyond the energy it saves. Weatherization not only lowers energy costs and puts money back into the pockets of low-income individuals and families helping them to become more economically self-sufficient, it is a good investment in Arizona's workforce with long term benefits and continued training for a green economy, and provides significant community benefits through improved housing stock and neighborhood conditions and increased economic activity. The Weatherization Assistance Program provides opportunity for key investment into Arizona's future.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of the signers below.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

  
Malissa Buzan  
Gila County Community Action

Jack Valentine

Western Arizona Council of Governments



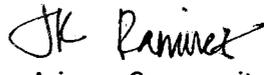
Bob Baca

Northern Arizona Council of Governments



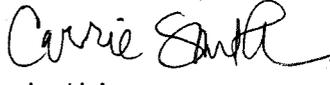
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