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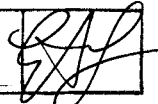
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*Strengthening Communities, Empowering People*

November 18, 2014

Chairman Bob Stump  
Commissioner Gary Pierce  
Commissioner Brenda Burns  
Commissioner Susan Bitter Smith  
Commission Bob Burns  
Arizona Corporation Commission  
1200 West Washington  
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2996

Arizona Corporation Commission  
**DOCKETED**  
NOV 18 2014

DOCKETED BY 

Re: **Docket No. E-0000XX-13-0214**

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION  
DOCKET CONTROL

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Chairman Stump and Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this topic. Weatherization and Energy Efficiency are extremely important programs to Western Arizona Council of Governments and the communities we serve, La Paz, Mohave and Yuma Counties. We appreciate the chance to inform you of the benefits we've realized from them.

The need in our community for assistance programs, such as weatherization, is substantial. More than 75,000 households in Mohave, La Paz and Yuma counties are eligible for weatherization. While the Great Recession has ended, the economy is not yet back to where it was before the crisis. Although the ratio of job-seekers to available jobs has decreased from its peak in 2010, half the people who are willing and able to work are unable to find employment. Locally, 1 in 4 children in Arizona are in poverty. The childhood poverty rates in Mohave and Yuma counties are 30%, above the state average.

The energy burden of the population we serve is significant. Energy burden, or the income spent on utilities as a percentage of total income, is much larger for low-income populations than for the population at large. Generally, an energy burden of 6% is considered affordable; limited-income communities in Arizona have an energy burden of 17%. These extreme energy burdens result in critical trade-offs made in family budgets: children in poverty who don't receive energy assistance experience a significant decrease in nutrition, and rates of adults who need medical care or prescription medication but couldn't afford it have shot up in recent years and remain above pre-recession levels.

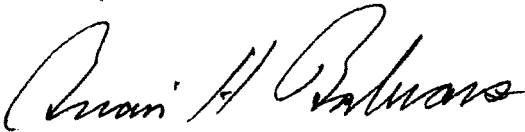
A significant amount of our clients are elderly households who will choose not to run their air conditioner or buy needed food or medication in order to pay the electric bill. Energy efficient measures and energy education result in costs savings to the elderly household and literally can mean life or death for our elderly population. Western Arizona Council of Governments targets outreach efforts to these households with our Weatherization service.

With so much need, weatherization has been a lifeline for our communities. As you know, weatherization entails improving a residence's building envelope, making the home energy efficient, repairing or replacing appliances, and addressing health and safety issues. In addition, Western Arizona Council of Governments provides energy education and offers Housing Counseling and Financial Literacy to our homeowners thereby increasing the impact of all services provided the family. This program is able to cut utility bills by a third, saving hundreds of dollars annually and bringing down energy burdens to a manageable level and helps low income families maintain an asset which not only improves their lives but also benefits the Community in maintaining housing stock which is not condemned or foreclosed on.

Thousands of homes have been weatherized in Arizona in the past few years, with hundreds in Mohave, Yuma, and La Paz counties alone. These improvements couldn't be realized without the coordination of federal and utility weatherization programs, with a third of all weatherization funding from ratepayer-funded programs. If weatherization or the Standards that provide it are altered, revised, or revoked every two years, it will be a severe hindrance to our ability to continue to provide this valuable program.

The Energy Efficiency Standard has kept utility bills lower for all ratepayers, and it's provided funding for weatherization, improving the lives of thousands of low-income Arizonans. Please protect and maintain this valuable and effective standard.

Sincerely,



Brian H. Babiars  
Western Arizona Council of Governments  
Executive Director

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