

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2011

The Honorable Steven Chu
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Chu:

We write to express our strong support for the Department of Energy to continue funding for two critical energy programs, the Weatherization Assistance Program and the State Energy Program, at fiscal year 2010 levels. Further, we believe that where the Department has discretion in awarding funds under the Weatherization Assistance Program, priority should be given to states that have demonstrated effective use of prior allocations of weatherization funds.

The Continuing Resolution approved by Congress cuts the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy budget within the Department of Energy, and we understand that leaves you with difficult decisions to make as you implement the Department's budget for the remainder of fiscal year 2011. However, at a time when residential heating oil prices are at record highs in New England, nearing \$4 per gallon according to the Energy Information Administration, we believe that now is not the time to be cutting investments that reduce energy bills for low income families. Weatherization services helps save families an average of \$437 a year on energy costs, reduces pollution, and creates jobs in local communities. Based on its success and the significant need for additional services during this time of high fuel prices, we respectfully request that the Department fund Weatherization at the level provided in fiscal year 2010, \$210 million. We also believe it makes sense to prioritize investments in states that have been the most effective at utilizing weatherization funds provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, because those states will have the most urgent need for additional funds to continue to serve families.

In addition, we believe every state benefits from the State Energy Program, which focuses on improving each state's specific energy challenges. Investments in the State Energy Program are incredibly effective at leveraging non-federal capital. A study by the Oakridge National Laboratory found every dollar invested in the State Energy Program leverages nearly \$11 in state and private sector funds. In addition, at a time of high unemployment, the State Energy Program helps retain jobs in manufacturing by fostering energy efficiency and creating financing tools for homeowners and businesses to reduce their energy bills. For these reasons, we respectfully request the State Energy Program, which supports jobs in every state, be funded at the fiscal year 2010 level of \$50 million.

We thank you for your leadership at the Department of Energy during this challenging time, and look forward to working with you to continue the success of these two vital programs.

Sincerely,



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



OLYMPIA SNOWE
United States Senator