

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 16, 2021

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave S.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Secretary Granholm:

With passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, we urge the Department of Energy to prioritize releasing funds through the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and State Energy Program (SEP) as expeditiously as possible. Congress provided substantial investment in these programs, and putting these funds to work quickly will help bolster economic recovery and insulate families from volatile energy costs.

As you know, Americans face the potential for significantly increased home heating bills this winter, particularly if prolonged cold snaps challenge constrained supplies for natural gas, propane, heating oil and other energy sources. Weatherization is a critically important tool to partner with Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funding to help families avoid financial hardship caused by increased energy costs. Specifically, weatherization allows LIHEAP dollars to go farther for recipients as their homes utilize energy in a more efficient manner. The Department of Energy should work with states to provide flexibility relative to the implementation of WAP funding. To that end, we encourage the consideration of new approaches to target larger groups of energy consumers in a more efficient manner and provide the necessary technical assistance to aid states in meeting applicable federal requirements.

The State Energy Program provides crucial funding and technical assistance to states that allow for the implementation of clean energy projects, improve the energy efficiency of public buildings and hospitals and foster energy innovation in the private sector. The most recent comprehensive study of SEP conducted in 2015 by Oak Ridge National Laboratory shows that every federal dollar invested in SEP leverages over \$10 for energy-related economic development and produces over \$7 in energy savings.¹ It is important to note the critical impact SEP dollars will have on other provisions included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, specifically allowing for the planning of new projects and initiatives made possible by this legislation.

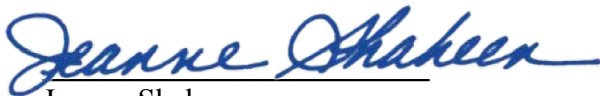
The \$3.5 billion provided in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for WAP and the \$500 million for the State Energy Program are also critical job creators for our states. As the most recent U.S. Energy and Employment Report shows, the energy sector was hit hard by the

¹ Oak Ridge National Laboratory, *National Evaluation of the State Energy Program: An Evaluation of Select Activities Conducted Under the State Energy Program*. April 2015.
<https://weatherization.ornl.gov/wp-content/uploads/pdf/SEPEvaluation/SEPReportVoll.pdf>.

economic impacts of the pandemic with more than 839,000 jobs lost in this sector in 2020. Prior to the pandemic, we saw an energy sector growing at a rate faster than the economy as a whole. This was especially true for energy efficiency, which employs more than 2 million Americans, often through small businesses. With the investments from the bipartisan infrastructure law, jobs in energy efficiency and other parts of the energy sector are primed for growth.

As long-standing supporters of WAP and SEP, we appreciate your commitment to improving energy efficiency and urge the Department to effectuate a timely process for distribution of funds and guidance for these crucial programs. We look forward to continuing to work with you on ensuring effective implementation of this important law.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

CC: Kelly Speakes-Backman, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy