

DE09-194



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF ENERGY AND PLANNING**



John H. Lynch
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To: Debra Howland, Executive Director
Public Utilities Commission
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From: Laura Richardson
Former Director, StayWarmNH

Mrs. Kibbert



RE: Petition to the PUC from OEP Regarding Unused 2008-09 StayWarmNH Funds

Summary:

The New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) requests the re-allocation of \$160,553.47 in unused funds previously dedicated to the StayWarmNH initiative to meet continuing needs. These re-allocated funds will be used by the Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to purchase winterization kits for low-income residents and for administrative services to support winterization kit distribution. Funds appropriated in 2008 were available through the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009. Unused funds are required to be returned to the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Fund (GHGERF) which is administered by the PUC. This petition process is necessary because the original funds were appropriated for a set period of time, FY09. It was not anticipated that this initiative would be 13% under budget. Targeted procurement, creative collaborations, and “bundling” large numbers of qualified homes in dense neighborhood settings helped reduce costs.

In the year since, new programs and funding opportunities (GHGERF and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) have addressed many energy efficiency measures sought by homeowners. However thousands of low-income residents continue to request weatherization and winterization services. These re-allocated funds can help meet some of these needs. The CAAs will be responsible for the budgeting, oversight, procurement, distribution, and overall management of the program.

History:

As energy costs soared in the summer of 2008, Governor John Lynch convened a group of NH leaders from State agencies and community organizations to address anticipated winter-related crises affecting the State’s most vulnerable residents. These collaborators developed a framework to expand weatherization and air-sealing efforts by the CAAs, and to offer outreach, support, and temporary but cost effective measures to reduce the impact of elevated energy costs.

A funding advance of \$1,200,000 from the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Fund – the fund’s first award – was legislatively appropriated for the program under House Bill 1653. Once funding became available, the partnering sponsors launched the program. OEP hosted the initiative; the NH Charitable

Foundation (NHCF) funded the Program Director; the Department of Health and Human Services provided administrative guidance; and the CAAs provided extraordinary work and support. Many other entities remained involved throughout the initiative.

The 2008-09 StayWarmNH initiative ultimately helped over 5,000 low-income households directly, through weatherization and airsealing by the CAAs, volunteer outreach and installation of winterization kits, and the distribution of Do-It-Yourself weatherization kits. Additionally, energy-saving and energy-safety tips, product lists, installation-training materials, and resources available through the StayWarmNH.org website reached thousands of other residents. This petition seeks to fund more Do-It-Yourself kits.

For the money invested in the program, significant energy was saved and emissions were reduced. The [Final StayWarmNH Report](#) states on page 3, “Of the 3,400 StayWarm kits distributed for Do-It-Yourself installation, assuming half the four CFLs included in the kit were installed by homeowners, (lifetime) savings for those 6,800 bulbs would be \$760,633; reducing CO2 pollution by 5,759,600 pounds, and averting the need for 3.74 MWh of electricity.” The four CFLs were part of a kit containing 30 energy-saving and energy-safety products, suggesting that even more energy was saved than the above example, although metrics are not available. The Do-It-Yourself winterization kits cost \$105,915, with overhead costs shared throughout the entire program.

This program proved to be very popular and meaningful for the homeowners served and the volunteers making community connections; comments regarding the program are available in [Appendix B](#) of the Final StayWarmNH Report. The [Final Report](#) for the Initiative is available at StayWarmNH.org.

Anticipated Partners:

The CAAs propose handling the logistics of procurement and distribution of materials. Volunteers interested in installing winterization products can be encouraged to work with their Local Energy Committees (LECs) and the CAAs and acquiring the kits through the CAAs. NHCF is partnering with the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund and both entities are enthusiastic about collaborating with the Tri-County CAA and local volunteers. They anticipate focusing winterization efforts specifically in the Colebrook area. Some LECs have expressed interest in providing winterization services within their communities, especially if materials are available. Clean Air-Cool Planet – umbrella organization for many of the LECs – has offered to provide connections between the CAAs and LECs, giving those new community groups empowering projects to focus on this winter.

Conclusion:

The StayWarmNH initiative helped the CAAs ramp up for unprecedented weatherization funding through ARRA. Even with an accelerated pace and funding for the weatherization programming, thousands of low-income homeowners will not receive these measures. Re-allocation of these funds in a timely manner will provide energy-saving and money-saving tools to these residents, while using this appropriation as originally intended. Thank you for considering this petition.