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October 27, 2009

NHPUC NOV02'09 AM10:34

Debra Howland, Executive Secretary
Public Utilities Commission
21 South Fruit Street
Concord, NH 03301

RE: DE 09-194 State of New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning
Re-allocation of 2009 StayWarmNH Unused Funds



Dear Ms. Howland:

On October 2, 2009 the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) filed a letter with the Public Utilities Commission requesting the re-allocation of \$160,553.47 in unused funds for the StayWarmNH initiative from State Fiscal Year 2009, which ended June 30, 2009. This reallocation would allow the New Hampshire Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to purchase and distribute weatherization kits for low income residents of the state. OEP stated that due to creative collaborations, targeting services to qualified homes in dense neighborhood settings and other factors, the initiative was implemented very efficiently, which resulted in program costs being approximately 13% lower than budgeted. OEP stated further that timely reallocation of these funds to the CAAs will help to provide energy savings to low income New Hampshire homeowners this winter, continuing the original purpose of the StayWarmNH program. OEP's proposal indicates that the CAAs would be responsible for the budgeting, oversight, procurement and distribution of weatherization kits, and overall management of the 2010 effort.

On October 13, 2009 the Commission docketed this filing as DE 09-194. On October 19, 2009 Commission Staff submitted a letter of support for OEP's request and recommended that the Commission issue an Order *Nisi* authorizing the re-allocation of the unused balance of the 2009 StayWarmNH funds.

The Office of Consumer Advocate supports OEP's request and Staff's recommendation that the Commission issue an Order *Nisi* to further the efforts of the CAAs to fully expend the sum authorized in HB1653 for the StayWarmNH initiative.

The OCA supports a reallocation that allows the CAAs maximum flexibility in utilizing the funds to serve low income residents in need of weatherization services. For example, if a resident requires more services than can be provided through a do-it-yourself weatherization kit, the OCA believes that such individuals might be better served if the CAAs are able to use the funds to provide more comprehensive weatherization services, if appropriate. There could also be immediate health and safety measures that are necessary which the weatherization kit may not be sufficient to address. We believe that this is consistent with the language of HB1653, which authorized the funds to “accelerate and expand the availability of weatherization services,” and “these funds may be used for the state’s existing income-eligible weatherization program and for the Stay Warm New Hampshire weatherization initiative.” NH RSA Chapter 392:3, I (2008).

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need more information. Please also add the OCA to the service list in this docket, including meredith.a.hatfield@oca.nh.gov, stephen.r.eckberg@oca.nh.gov, and ocalitigation@oca.nh.gov.

Respectfully,



Meredith A. Hatfield
Consumer Advocate

cc: Service List