



Retail Merchants Association of NH

Established 1966

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July 9, 2012

Debra A. Howland
Executive Director and Secretary
New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
21 S. Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301

Re: CORE and Gas Energy Efficiency Programs
Docket No. DE 10-188

Dear Secretary Howland:

The Retail Merchants Association of New Hampshire (RMANH) has been operating a successful Energy Efficiency Program as part of the Public Utilities Commission's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Fund for the past three years. The program has seen much success in developing an active group of small and mid-size businesses who are undertaking energy retrofits. However, as a consequence of recent legislation, specifically, House Bill 1490, the funding for this program will be transferred to the Utility Core Programs.

To date, the RMANH has not been a party to DE-10-188 the CORE program docket; however, in light of the transfer of funds, it would appear that opportunities for the businesses we work with for energy efficiency programs now are subject to regulatory proceedings at the PUC. We are concerned that while the impact of HB 1490 will be to inject new energy efficiency dollars into the CORE programs, having not been a participant in this proceeding, we did not have the opportunity to weigh-in on the use of these new dollars.

When DE 10-188 was noticed and opened many months ago, the prospect of the transfer of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Funds was neither fully contemplated, nor an immediate concern. In fact, this approach to the use of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) funds had been defeated in the Legislature and vetoed by the Governor last year. The actual language concerning the transfer did not emerge until very late in the process in HB 1490, and the amendment in which it was developed never had a public hearing at which the RMANH could offer public testimony. This abrupt change in circumstances would also seem to have prevented the record in this proceeding from being thoroughly vetted, or including valuable input from the RMANH or other affected parties.

Given the impact of HB 1490 on energy efficiency investments and the CORE program it might have been advisable to re-notice the proceeding. If the Commission chooses to do so as a consequence of this letter, the RMANH would not object, but seek to participate. While not surrendering any rights under RSA 541-A, the RMANH would alternatively ask that the Commission consider the altered landscape, limit its applicability to those CORE dollars derived from the systems benefit charge in this docket, and leave to a new proceeding how to allocate the RGGI dollars. We truly believe that to do so would offer the Commission the opportunity to be creative and transformational in how these new funds may be applied.

While we understand the limitations of the CORE program dollars, we also know that the benefits of the RMANH Energy Efficiency Program include a strong incentive to leverage meaningful private dollars, offer a more fuel blind approach to energy conservation and perhaps a more robust effort to begin to transform the market. It would be our hope to offer our experience and perspective to a new, more dynamic CORE program. However, should the Commission close the door to this information by simply rolling the new dollars into the old program, much could be lost.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy C. Kyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy C. Kyle
President/CEO

cc: Service List