United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Chairman
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Ranking Member Alexander:

We are writing to request support for two key programs within the Department of Energy: the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and the State Energy Program (SEP). These programs provide the foundation for clean energy investments that create jobs, increase American competitiveness, save families and businesses money through improved energy efficiency, and reduce pollution. We appreciate your past support for these important programs and respectfully request that you fund WAP at $230 million and SEP at $63 million for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015.

For more than three decades, the Weatherization Assistance Program has helped low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities make lasting and cost-effective energy efficiency improvements to their homes. To date, more than 7.3 million homes have been weatherized, providing as much as $450 in annual savings on a household's energy bill. WAP also supports thousands of high quality jobs. The National Association of State Community Services Programs estimates that there are about 10,000 highly skilled jobs in the weatherization network, with countless more supported in related businesses including materials suppliers, vendors, and manufacturers. WAP has helped the construction industry and given a boost to American manufacturers and small businesses during challenging economic times. In addition, electric and gas utilities in many states depend on the WAP delivery network to carry out low-income residential efficiency initiatives, leveraging resources and increasing the impact of WAP in these states. Funding WAP at $230 million, closer to historic funding levels, will ensure that states have the resources to support weatherization programs that help reduce the burden of high energy prices on low-income families.

The State Energy Program also has a history of success working across all sectors of the economy and supporting cost-effective energy efficiency improvements. The last comprehensive study of the program by Oak Ridge National Lab showed that each federal dollar invested in SEP is leveraged by nearly $11 of state and private funds and results in more than $7 in annual energy savings. SEP-supported projects and programs include a wide-range of activities, such as school and hospital energy efficiency programs, industrial and commercial programs, agricultural projects, and private sector energy innovation through business incubators and job training. We respectfully request that SEP be funded at $63 million, the same level as the President's FY2015 budget request, with at least $50 million of this amount to be provided to states by formula.

We recognize the ongoing fiscal challenges and urge you to prioritize WAP and SEP, two well-established, cost-effective programs that support jobs, contribute to the nation's economic recovery, and help meet important goals like improving energy efficiency and lowering energy costs. We believe this is a sound investment of federal dollars and that ensuring that there are adequate resources to maintain effective WAP and SEP programs should be a priority.

Thank you for your attention to and consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to ensure the continuation of these important programs.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed

Susan Collins

Sherrod Brown

Chris Coons

Bernard Sanders

Tom Harkin

Angus King

Mary L. Landrieu

Ron Wyden

Kirsten Gillibrand

Patrick Leahy

Chris Murphy

Joe Manchin

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Al Franken

Maria Cantwell

Elizabeth Warren

Charles Schumer

Debbie Stabenow

Jim Johnson

J. A. B.

Carl Levin

Tom Udall

Edward J. Markey

Jon Tester

Bob Casey, Jr.

Dick Durbin

Tim Kaine

Tammy Baldwin

Brian Schatz

Richard Blumenthal

Robert Menendez

Sheldon Whitehouse

Jay Rockefeller

Benjamin L. Cardin

Heidi Heitkamp

Jeanne Shaheen

Mazie K. Hirono

Amy Klobuchar