

May 2, 2023

Senator Scott Martin  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
Pennsylvania State Senate  
501 N 3rd St  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Business Support for Whole-Home Repairs Funding

Dear Chair Martin:

We write to you as a coalition of companies and business groups who do business and employ workers in Pennsylvania. We urge the General Assembly to allocate \$300 million for the Whole-Home Repairs Program in the 2023-2024 budget and to make funding for this program permanent.

The Whole-Home Repairs Program establishes a one-stop shop in each county in our Commonwealth for lifesaving home repairs, weatherization, and adaptive modifications, while simultaneously building up our local workforce and adding new family-sustaining jobs in a growing field. Whole-Home Repairs is the first program of its kind in the nation, helping Pennsylvanians stay warm, safe, and dry in homes they can afford. This is vital in a state with old housing stock, with almost 300,000 homes needing critical repair.<sup>i</sup>

Last year, the General Assembly made a historic investment of \$125 million to set up Whole-Home Repairs. Since then, the need for the program has only become more apparent. When the Department of Community and Economic Development opened applications to counties in December 2022, 95% applied to administer Whole-Home Repairs for their residents. Sadly, the initial seed funding will only address a small fraction of the eligible applications received by county administrators.

The Whole-Home Repairs Program is critical to ensuring energy affordability and access to efficiency for the households that need it most. While there are various state, federal, and utility-led programs that aim to help low-income residents access energy efficiency, significant gaps and a lack of clear coordination between programs mean that many Pennsylvanians go unserved. For example, analysis of Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) services in PA indicated that more than a third of customers are deferred annually from participation due to structural or health issues in the home that aren't covered by these programs, such as moisture issues, roof repair, and knob-and-tube wiring.<sup>ii</sup>

This doesn't just leave extensive energy savings on the table. It also allows poor housing conditions and unaffordable utility bills to persist for some of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable residents. The Whole-Home Repairs program, which specifically assigns funding for coordination efforts, has exciting potential to fill these gaps.

The energy efficiency (EE) industry is vital to the execution of these energy-saving and health-improving measures, and it is well-established, ready, and eager to do this work. Energy efficiency employs the most workers of any energy sector in Pennsylvania! In fact, Pennsylvania is home to well over 10,000 EE businesses, and there are energy efficiency workers in every single county.<sup>iii</sup> This field is poised to grow even further, but

energy efficiency businesses report a workforce shortage to meet the growing demand for efficiency in the state. The Whole-Home Repairs Program is also set to alleviate this problem with its dedicated funding for workforce development.

Growing the EE sector is good for workers and good for PA's economy. Energy efficiency and other clean energy jobs are good jobs, with Pennsylvania workers reporting high rates of job satisfaction, opportunities for advancement, and provision of key employee benefits.<sup>iv</sup> Investing in the creation of local jobs and training in the growing industry will improve communities across the Commonwealth.

We urge you to permanently fund the Whole-Home Repairs program to help Pennsylvanians stay in their homes, improve blight in our communities, and create local family-sustaining jobs.

Sincerely,

Chris Cieslak, Chief Operating Officer  
Green Building Alliance

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Green Building United

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Franklin Energy

Sebbi Wu, Senior Associate, State Policy  
Ceres

Amal Mahrouki, Director of Legislative Affairs  
AIA Pennsylvania

Jeanee Zappa, Executive Director  
Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance

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<sup>i</sup> American Housing Survey. (2021) *2021 Pennsylvania — Housing Quality — All Occupied Units*. [https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/interactive/ahstablecreator.html?s\\_areas=00042&s\\_year=2021&s\\_tablename=TABLE5&s\\_bygroup1=1&s\\_bygroup2=1&s\\_filtergroup1=1&s\\_filtergroup2=1](https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/interactive/ahstablecreator.html?s_areas=00042&s_year=2021&s_tablename=TABLE5&s_bygroup1=1&s_bygroup2=1&s_filtergroup1=1&s_filtergroup2=1) (Click on “Get Table” on the bottom left to generate the data. Of PA's occupied housing units, over 69,000 are rated as “severely inadequate” and over 234,000 as “moderately inadequate.”)

<sup>ii</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. *Pennsylvania Weatherization Assistance Program LIHEAP Deferral Program 2019-2020*. <https://nascsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PA-2019-2020-LIHEAP-Deferral-Program-Guidelines.pdf>, pg. 2

<sup>iii</sup> E4TheFuture (2022). *Pennsylvania: Energy Efficiency Jobs in America*. [https://e4thefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Pennsylvania\\_2022.pdf](https://e4thefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Pennsylvania_2022.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (2021). 2021 Pennsylvania Clean Energy Industry Workforce Development Needs Assessment & Gap Analysis. [https://files.dep.state.pa.us/Energy/Office%20of%20Energy%20and%20Technology/OETDPortalFiles/2021CleanEnergyGapAnalysis/PA\\_2021\\_Clean\\_Energy\\_Gap\\_Analysis\\_Report.pdf](https://files.dep.state.pa.us/Energy/Office%20of%20Energy%20and%20Technology/OETDPortalFiles/2021CleanEnergyGapAnalysis/PA_2021_Clean_Energy_Gap_Analysis_Report.pdf), pg. 6