

# *Weatherization Works!*



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## **Testimony on SB 1124**

**Gene Brady, Executive Director  
The Commission on Economic Opportunity**

**Public Health and Welfare Committee  
Pennsylvania Senate**

**February 3, 2010**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today. I am Gene Brady, Executive Director of the Commission on Economic Opportunity, a multi-service community organization located in Luzerne County, and Chairman of the Pennsylvania Weatherization Providers' Task Force, a statewide association of the 43 organizations operating the Weatherization Program in Pennsylvania. The Weatherization Providers also operate a LIHEAP Crisis Interface component which is the weather-related heating emergency component of the LIHEAP Crisis Program. I believe this component is referred to in SB 1124 as "energy crisis intervention". If that is correct, we are concerned that the language describing this component is too ambiguous. If this section refers to the Crisis Interface, the outreach and eligibility determination is completed by either the Department of Public Welfare or the Crisis contract provider and then referred to the Weatherization Provider. But the Weatherization Provider does not "administer" the program.

SB 1124 also calls for a "reasonable amount of funds" to be set aside for "energy crisis intervention" based on the prior years experience. Historically, 15% of LIHEAP funds have been transferred to the Weatherization Assistance Program. But the 15% transfer requirement was removed in the 2009-2010 General Fund Budget. Subsequently, less than 15% of the funds available were transferred by the administration. This has resulted in half of the counties across the state running out of Crisis funds to date, less than one month into the Crisis program. There has also been a reallocation of crisis funds among the providers in order to keep programs open into February, but by law the Crisis program must remain open until March 15<sup>th</sup>. Clearly, the funds provided by the administration are not adequate and additional funds need to be provided. In order to alleviate this problem, the Weatherization Task Force would appreciate the Committee's consideration of amendatory language that would restore the Weatherization Assistance Program to 15% of the state's annual LIHEAP allocation in future years.

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SB 1124 also implies that the Weatherization program operates without oversight. This is not the case. The Weatherization Assistance Program is federally funded, and governed by the US Department of Energy (DOE). The LIHEAP funds allocated for Weatherization Assistance are administered in accordance with the US DOE regulations contained in Title 10 CFR Part 440. Local organizations operate the Weatherization Program in each Pennsylvania County in compliance with the standards set forth in OMB Circulars A-110, A-122 and A-133. They are audited each year by an independent certified public accounting firm, and included as part of each organizations' A-133 audit submitted to the Federal Government. Compliance with these regulations within each organization is monitored regularly by the Department of Community and Economic Development. Monitoring includes a physical inspection of a sample of homes as well as a record review. To imply that a Performance Audit by the Legislative Budget & Finance Committee is required because of a lack of oversight misrepresents the reality of the program's supervision.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with my testimony today. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

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