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**PUBLIC HEARING  
STATE PLAN / MASTER FILE WORKSHEET  
NEW HAMPSHIRE WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM  
Thursday, May 7, 2009  
1:00 –3:30 PM  
Office of Energy and Planning  
4 Chenell Drive, Concord, NH**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES PRESENT:**

Ryan Clouthier, Southern New Hampshire Services  
Doreen Needham, United Valley Interfaith Project  
Lyman Fitzgerald, United Valley Interfaith Project  
Tobias Marquette, Sustainable Development & Energy Systems  
Jay Aucella, Aucella Heating & Cooling  
Representative David Borden, State of New Hampshire  
Bob Couch, Cobb Hill Construction  
Craig Dunning  
Kendall Buck, Home Builders Association  
Beth Fischer, Home Builders Association  
Charlie Wolf, Strafford County Community Action Committee  
John Jackson, Carpenters Union  
John Murphy, Murphy Corporation  
Eva Castillo, NH Alliance for Immigrants & Refugees  
Honore Murenzi, New American Africans  
Judy Elliott, NH Workers' Center  
Dana Nute, Belknap Merrimack Community Action Program  
Jack Shields, Belknap Merrimack Community Action Program  
Joe Casey, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
Bob Reals, Business & Energy Services  
Liz Skidmore, Carpenters Union  
Dick Henry, Jordan Institute  
Alan Linder, New Hampshire Legal Assistance  
Dan Feltes, New Hampshire Legal Assistance  
Tom Pfau  
Jerry Kingwill, Cobb Hill Construction  
Julie Creamer, Preservation of Affordable Housing  
Mark McKenzie, New Hampshire AFL CIO  
Elizabeth Fischer, Unutil

Anne Jette, United Valley Interfaith Project  
David Henry, NH Office of Economic Stimulus  
Nancy Gamble, NH Office of Energy and Planning  
Amy Ignatius, NH Office of Energy and Planning  
Celeste Lovett, NH Office of Energy and Planning  
Eric Steltzer, NH Office of Energy and Planning  
Michele Zydel, NH Office of Energy and Planning

**Written testimony received from:**

Edward J. Foley, NH State Building and Construction Trades Council  
Amy S. Anthony, Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc.

**PROGRAM MANAGER PRESENT:**

Andrew Gray, Weatherization Program Manager, NH Office of Energy and Planning

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Gray called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM on May 7, 2009 at the NH Office of Energy and Planning, 4 Chenell Drive, Concord, NH.

“As described in the legal notice, the purpose of this public hearing is to receive testimony or comments regarding the State Plan for the NH Weatherization Program that is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Per Department of Energy, Weatherization Program Notice 09-B, the purposes of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 are:

‘To preserve and create jobs and promote economic recovery; to assist those most impacted by the recession; to provide investments needed to increase economic efficiency by spurring technological advances in science and health; to invest in transportation, environmental protection, and other infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits; and to stabilize State and local government budgets in order to minimize and avoid reductions in essential services and counterproductive state and local tax increases.’

The minutes of this hearing and testimony or comments received will be included in the State Plan for the record. To the extent that I can answer any questions quickly, I will. However, I reserve the right to defer answering questions until such time that allows for a complete response. Those wishing to provide oral testimony or comments have indicated so on the sign-in sheet. I will start at the top of the list. Each person will have 5 (or 10) minutes to speak.”

“The NH Weatherization Program has received approximately \$23.2M from ARRA which will be distributed through Community Action Agencies and spent over a 3 year period. The allowable average for expenditures per unit increased from \$3,050 to \$6,500. ARRA raised the eligibility from 185% to 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. We received a substantial increase in training and technical assistance funds at approximately \$5M. Over the course of 3 years, we are expecting to complete 2,606 units based solely from funding at the \$6,500 average.”

“The minutes of this hearing and testimony or comments received will be included in the State Plan submitted to DOE. OEP reserves the right to defer questions that require more attention or follow up to another time.”

Nancy Gamble, OEP's newly hired Weatherization Program Manager introduced herself and deferred questions to Mr. Gray.

The meeting was formally opened to questions and comments following attendee self-introductions.

## **II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Judy Elliott introduced herself as the coordinator of the NH Workers' Center, a coalition of community, immigrant, religious, and neighborhood groups. She offered the following comments:

1. This is a program funded with stimulus money and we understand the purpose is to provide good quality employment for workers. We think accountability, good wages, health insurance, good training, and retirement benefits are an essential part of the package.
2. The NH Workers' Center and the NH Building Trades Counsel, along with various organizations held a couple of serious meetings about the problematic number of workers from communities of color who are under-represented in NH construction, whether organized or unorganized. They are hoping to integrate African and Latino refugee workers into the weatherization program.

Doreen Needham, United Valley Interfaith Project, stated that they are a church group located in the Connecticut River Valley and have concerns with the weatherization project, specifically trying to get the legislature to provide long term funding that goes beyond the stimulus package and more money per household. They also hope to keep weatherization jobs local.

Beth Fisher spoke on behalf of the NH Home Builders and Remodelers Association. She stated that this is an opportunity for their associates and members to get back to work since there is limited new construction in New Hampshire. She recommended that a high-bar of standard be set for training auditors. She stated that additional dollars in redoing work performed by CETA workers was spent to correct things because the standard wasn't there. She suggested that weatherization stimulus money be spent on BPI training and partial scholarships. She expressed concern about OEP's ability to have enough staff to handle all the work and said an efficient delivery system is important. She also addressed the need for providing general and healthcare benefits for workers hired in weatherization positions.

Kendal Buck, Home Builders Association, noted that the State Plan referenced program monitoring so that deficiencies could be noted. He said quality of work issues could be addressed before they occur by utilizing people with training, resulting in minimal opportunity for mismanagement. He said training is a big issue.

John Jackson, representing NH Property Unions, stated that they hope that as people get put to work this plan will make provisions so the people who are doing the work are provided with a livable wage and an opportunity to have good training - something people could use for their whole career. In addition, they also believe it's a good opportunity to get people to work who don't have an opportunity to work in this field, especially minorities and women. He said that they hope these are included in the State Plan and that they have a number of contractors able to deliver these types of projects on time and on budget.

John Murphy, Murphy & Associates, installs windows, skylights, etc. with an experienced crew pre-qualified to do this work and would like an opportunity to bid on this work.

Eva Castillo, NH Alliance for Immigrants & Refugees, trains refugees through unions. She stated that people (immigrants and refugees) are under-served, have lousy jobs, and are abused by employers. This would be a great opportunity for them to learn a trade they could use the rest of their lives. She said unions have excellent programs for apprenticeships.

Honore Murenzi, New American Africans, stated they would like to see more opportunities for refugees.

Dana Nute, Belknap Merrimack Community Action Program, responded to Beth's concerns about the auditors. He said that every ad placed by the community action program agencies state that workers will receive full benefits including a healthcare program. He stated that setting the bar high is the best thing to do, although there is a shortage of qualified contractors in the State. He also stated that RFP's for contractors would be listed on websites for each agency.

Joe Casey, IBEW, represents NH Builders Construction Trades. He expressed concern about worker wages, stating that they vary widely from the seacoast to Coos County - where they see the lowest wages. He said they need good jobs and hopes the weatherization program will look at a broad-based wage. He stated that there are a lot of people out of work and the construction industry has been devastated. He said training programs are the responsible thing to do and will help people to continue on with their trade. He stated we owe that to the taxpayers and this is a one-time lump sum of money and we want to prepare them through apprenticeship programs.

Liz Skidmore, Carpenters Union, stated she was disappointed that the following were not included in the State Plan.

1. A plan to offer livable, family-sustaining wages. The federal requirement is that wages be set at the residential Davis-Bacon rates. Residential rates have not been updated in 15 years. Current wages for carpenters in Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, Merrimack and Sullivan counties are at \$10.96 with \$.33 in benefits. She said no one can get a carpenter under \$11.00 hour. Electricians are at \$13.29 with \$0 benefits. Licensed electricians are under \$15.00 per hour. She said the Carsey Institute did a study of livable wages and the Davis-Bacon rates need to be revised.
2. Jobs created by federal tax dollars should provide health insurance. If one contractor who provides health insurance for his workers bids against another who doesn't, the former will never be the low bidder. All bidders should be required to provide health insurance.
3. The state requires that new workers be part of a registered apprenticeship program. These programs provide progressive, supervised training, both classroom and on-the-job, so their skills progress.
4. Contractors need to be held accountable for hiring under skilled and diverse workers.

Dick Henry, The Jordan Institute, provided Mr. Gray with written testimony. He stated that energy efficiency in multi-family housing needs to be implemented. A subcommittee core efficiency study was based on 97,000 qualified housing units – the new ARRA standard puts it at 111,000 units. He said it is important to address low-income families and that monies should be allocated to multi-

family housing. He stated that multi-family housing has not received much attention and now we have an opportunity to address it.

He said that HUD and DOE entered into a new MOA to streamline the process for new energy source funding. He said that weatherization efforts could provide a 20% to 30% return in multi-family housing. He noted that monitoring and verification are important components and urged OEP to consider multi-year monitoring in order to evaluate what measures work best and that feedback from this monitoring will allow OEP to provide information to builders, allowing a greater yield.

Julie Creamer, Preservation of Affordable Housing stated that they are a non-profit organization that acquires homes and manages affordable housing communities in 14 states and that they have not been able to tap into weatherization resources. She stated that they've been educating residents on energy efficiency, citing examples such as Energy Star appliances and low flush toilets. She said that they hope the State will consider multi-family housing because the need is there and the impact can be great.

Dick Henry stated that about 30% to 35% of the 111,000 units are multi-family units.

Alan Linder, New Hampshire Legal Assistance, provided Mr. Gray with written testimony. He introduced NH Legal Assistance as an organization that provides free legal service to low income families across the state. He said that in the area of energy, they are involved in representing groups before NH PUC and have participated in legal proceedings on gas and energy efficiency. He said that infusion of weatherization monies would enable the expansion of energy efficiency work and natural gas efficiency programs. Upon reviewing the draft State Plan, he offered the following changes as a way to help OEP strengthen and help conform to federal weatherization regulations and meet the goals of ARRA:

1. They reviewed the language of the training, education, and monitoring sections of the draft plan and said the words "seek to" and "try to" should be changed to read "will do" where it states what OEP is proposing to do with the funding.
2. With respect to job creation, the federal statute of the ARRA states its purpose is to create jobs, promote economic recovery, and assist those most impacted by recession. He said low-income housing has been greatly impacted and sees an opportunity for job creation as part of the weatherization program. He noted the opportunity for training and providing meaningful jobs for members of low-income communities. He said it offers an opportunity to seek out these individuals and provide them with jobs skills that will enable them to become self-sustaining. He said the purpose of the Act is job creation and recommends that the draft plan include a provision to look at recruiting from a labor force that includes the chronically unemployed. He said OEP could structure the plan with a provision that the subgrantees undertake certain efforts to recruit and hire from low-income communities. Once hired, these workers should receive adequate training to enable them to acquire sustainable and lasting skill sets.
3. Reporting is a very important component and accountability is the essence of these funds and that OEP might want to consider a reporting requirement that breaks out household income ranges receiving weatherization monies as a way to track where the bulk of the funds are being spent.

4. Federal regulations address subgrantees and NH Legal Assistance endorses the Community Action Agencies, based on their experience and their quick ability to have the capacity to provide weatherization services. They have worked with the CAA's for many years and have found them to provide excellent high quality work. They work well with low-income communities and have the capacity, mission and commitment, and NH Legal Assistance strongly endorses that the Community Action Agencies be subgrantees.

He said that OEP should consider including multi-family dwellings in the state plan so the bulk of the work done isn't overly weighted towards single-family dwellings. He said their understanding is that there is a separate funding stream for assisted housing and those funds will be able to be coordinated with the ARRA.

Mark McKenzie, President, New Hampshire AFL-CIO stated they have struggled, from an organized labor perspective, to figure out ways to come together. He said they have a terrific infrastructure to provide opportunities – a \$1.4M training center in an energy efficient environment to teach workers. They have a \$4M training center that teaches window glazing and these resources are available to the State.

He said that the State Plan needs to address apprenticeship training. He said they can provide it as well as others but there is a standard they can provide. He said they have been doing work with DOT and are concerned about transparency. He suggested that a book be written about what we did in NH with the stimulus money because getting information from the State of NH is a nightmare.

He said they are willing and prepared to work with OEP.

Mr. Gray read the audience the written testimony submitted by Edward J. Foley, NH State Building and Construction Trades Council, and May S. Anthony, Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc.

Tobias Marquette, Sustainable Development & Energy Systems, said that becoming BPI-certified as a Building Analyst energy auditor is an extremely expensive process and that there is very little structure in New Hampshire for certification training. He said unless their training (in his field of work) is nationally recognized, they are unable to take their skills into the public sector. He said that following his written training, he needed to finish his BPI field training in Montana at his own cost due to the lack of available training in New Hampshire.

Craig Dunning said he needed to complete his certification in New York and was left to his own devices for the practical part of the training. He said whatever the training component, it shouldn't allow students to drop off the edge. It needs to bring them to the point where they can actually do it.

Dick Henry said training is extremely important but the companies that head up crews should have access to someone they could call with questions, someone technically on call.

There was brief discussion on next steps and when the final State Plan will be submitted. Mr. Gray said it will be submitted on May 12, 2009 and he will post the final plan on OEP's website.

Eric Steltzer, NH Office of Energy and Planning, said a sign-up sheet for the e-mail distribution list, “Stay Informed,” can be found on OEP’s website <http://www.nh.gov/oep>. Stay Informed is designed to notify registrants of ARRA activity on the three programs managed by OEP that are receiving federal funding.

Mr. Gray closed the Public Hearing at 2:40 PM.

Minutes Submitted By: Michele K. Zydel

Minutes Approved By: Andrew Gray