



Date: June 14, 2023

To: Chairperson Scott, Vice Chair Andrews, and MVC Wendzel, and members of the House Energy, Communications, and Technology Committee

From: Wende Randall, Board Secretary of the Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm

Re: The Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm support of SB 288

The Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm believes energy assistance programs, including the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), act as an important safety and security valve for countless Michigan households. Home energy can be an overwhelming financial burden for limited income households.

Energy affordability is vital for so many Michigan families and seniors who pay a greater percentage of their household income on essential energy utilities. Households that are low income are often choosing between which bill to pay or what they can afford. The cost of energy directly impacts how much a senior household can spend on food and needed items, like prescription medicines. While Michigan has a variety of energy assistance programs, many eligible households remain unassisted because of the lack of funding. Affordability with today's inflation and higher cost of other essential goods only compounds this problem.

The Coalition commends Chair Scott and other members of this committee for their work on the bipartisan Energy Reliability, Resilience, and Accountability Task Force. We know that listening to residents in every corner of our state will be important to the legislature's future policy decision making.

We urge this committee to support SB 288 because MEAP is due to sunset at the end of September, just prior to Michigan's winter heating season. Knowing with certainty this program will continue is vital and essential for the operation of the program. There is not enough funding to support the needs of Michigan households in need, not to mention the growing needs of those who face energy burdens but earn just above energy assistance program guidelines. MEAP sunseting would be devastating.

Since 1987, the Coalition has worked to improve the availability of financial and human resources to meet the energy assistance needs of Michigan's limited income households. The members perform this mission through the exchange of information, developing new ideas, outreach and education, and collaboration. We look forward to being a resource to the legislature and this committee as it continues to work on behalf of the people of Michigan.

Members of the Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm include: AARP, CLEAResult, Consumers Energy, DTE Energy, EcoWorks, Food Bank Council of Michigan, Habitat for Humanity, Kent County Essential Needs Taskforce, Lansing Board of Water & Light, National Kidney Foundation, Michigan Department of Health & Human Services, Michigan 211, Michigan Community Action, Michigan Electric & Gas Association, Michigan Energy Options, Michigan League for Public Policy, Michigan Municipal Electric Association, Michigan Propane Gas Association, Michigan Public Service Commission, Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency, SEMCO Energy, St. Vincent de Paul Detroit, Superior Watershed Partnership, THAW, The Salvation Army, TrueNorth Community Services, United Way of South Central Michigan, Wayne Metro Community Action Agency, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, and hundreds of other individual and organizational supporters from around the state

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