



March 24, 2010

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*Adjunct member

Hon. Isiah Leggett, County Executive
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street,
Rockville, MD 20852-2540

Subject: Comments on Montgomery County Regulation 2-10 (Home Energy Loan Program)

Dear County Executive Leggett:

The Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) wishes to congratulate Montgomery County for creating the groundbreaking Home Energy Loan Program (HELP).

We strongly support the program as an innovative measure to assist homeowners with reducing their energy use, and increase clean energy generation by borrowing money to retrofit their homes, with repayment through the property tax bill. HELP offers homeowners a unique opportunity to obtain cost-effective financing for home improvements that will result in lower energy bills. This program also directly benefits the economy by creating new opportunities for local businesses and workforce.

By requiring home energy audits based on the Home Performance with Energy Star process and requiring Building Performance Institute (BPI) certification for contractors, the HELP program will meet the highest professional standards and result in effective energy savings. The way HELP is designed also ensures the cost-effectiveness of improvements financed under the program, is designed to result in a positive cash flow for the homeowner and limited financial risk for banking institutions.

COG's *National Capital Region Climate Change Report* found that the residential sector accounts for 33 percent of the energy demand in the region. The COG Board of Directors adopted targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2012, 2020 and 2050. Encouraging homeowners to weatherize their homes, purchase efficient appliances, install programmable thermostats, and adopt other cost effective measures to reduce energy use and produce clean energy will contribute significantly to achieving regional greenhouse gas and energy reduction goals.

We believe that Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) programs are a very attractive way to assist homeowners maximize energy efficiency and clean energy use in their

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homes. We are hopeful that the Montgomery County HELP program will be able to offer attractive interest rates.

We believe the HELP program has the necessary ingredients to be successful and provide a model for other jurisdictions in the metropolitan Washington region to follow. We look forward to hearing about your experience with the program as it is implemented over the coming year.

Sincerely yours,

Jay Fiset, Chair
COG Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee

cc: Eric Coffman