

Chairman Aric Nesbitt
Michigan House Energy Policy Committee
Anderson House Office Building
124 North Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

May 5, 2015

Chairman Nesbitt,

I am writing on behalf of the Home Energy Retrofit Task Force in Holland, MI. As you may know, the City of Holland has established the goal of becoming a world-class energy efficient city. As a contribution toward that larger goal, the task force has been laying the groundwork which would make a deep energy retrofit available to every homeowner in Holland. The Task Force does not speak for the City Council or the city staff. We make recommendations; many of which are acted upon.

There is much work to be done. Holland's homes uses 38% more energy than the average house in the Midwest Region--- a level of inefficiency that leaves us vulnerable to any sudden changes in global energy markets. Inefficiency directly leads to higher energy bills for homeowners and these bills are a significant burden for low and fixed income homeowners.

We are excited about the potential for home energy retrofits. Energy efficiency means net-capacity gain at the power plant, upgraded neighborhoods, a stronger tax base, home security for low income homeowners, and local economic stimulus in the millions of dollars. Our study indicates that all these things are possible, but contingent upon the decisions being made by each individual homeowner; in Holland, that means participation by some 7,400 single-family homeowners.

Holland homeowners have indicated to us that they support the community goals. However, there is some hesitancy when each homeowner must consider the depth and extent of their investment. In this context, we have found the availability of incentives to be invaluable. The Energy Optimization provision of PA295 has been a valuable resource; homeowner's respond to the rebates which these funds enable.

We understand the EPA imperative to develop an integrated energy plan for Michigan. We understand that a careful review of all the resources must be a part of this process. Please know that local control for municipal utilities is an overall plus. We are concerned, however, by the suggested elimination of the PA295 Energy Optimization program. We do not believe that the jettisoning of known effective tools constitutes a valid strategy.

The task force has been working for two and a half years to construct a credible and affordable home retrofit program for Holland. The delivery of financial incentives has emerged as a critical component of our planning. PA295 established a platform for energy efficiency programming in Michigan. The loss of PA295 now would create the kind of uncertainty that jeopardizes our good start. We ask that you work for the continued maintenance of the Energy Optimization program.

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