

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

September 1, 2021

Re: Invest in Main Street Efficiency

Dear Chairman Pallone and Chairman Rush:

Small businesses are the undisputed backbone of the U.S. economy, accounting for nearly half of the nation's gross domestic product and half of its employment. But Main Street is suffering!

We write today as a coalition of business, government, environmental, and consumer leaders, to urge you to invest in the economic vitality of Main Street, U.S.A., by establishing a federal grant program to make small businesses across the nation more energy efficient. Congress can help Main Street regain competitiveness while exiting the economic crater caused by the Covid-19 pandemic by including the Main Street Efficiency Act, introduced in the 117th Congress as Rep. Peter Welch as H.R. 4903 and as S. 2665 by Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, in any budget-based infrastructure legislation.

The Main Street Efficiency Act would establish a grant program at the Department of Energy to supplement, not supplant, utility demand-side management investments in small businesses that not only save energy and avoid carbon emissions, but more critically to these struggling enterprises, reduce monthly operating costs for years to come, allowing entrepreneurs to re-invest in their businesses and employees.

This point can't be overstated – energy efficiency is not only the most cost-effective energy saving and carbon abatement solution; energy efficiency also reduces costs while creating non-exportable jobs in design, construction, and domestic manufacturing.

Prior to the pandemic, energy efficiency led the clean energy sector with a workforce employing nearly 2.4 million Americans — more than 40 times the size of the coal mining labor force, and nearly seven times as big as the wind and solar industries, combined. Although Congress has so far helped small-to-medium enterprises through forgivable loans and other targeted relief, more small businesses are currently shuttered than at any time during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Across the United States, small businesses account for as much as half of any utility's energy demand, yet, even under the best of economic times, investment in the sector lags, with less than 10% of most budgets aimed at small businesses. Nationwide, small businesses spend \$60 billion annually on utility bills, which are often among the top-3 largest expenses for any small business. These bills could be cut by as much as 30% with energy efficient upgrades, like those that would be funded under the Main Street Efficiency Act.

These are not new programs but have existed for decades; the ecosystem of regulatory authority and supply chains required for rapid infusion of capital into a critical economic sector already exists. Not only would federal funds be well shepherd by existing state and local regulatory bodies that already verify

cost-effectiveness and quality control under existing mechanisms, but each federal dollar would additionally leverage non-federal investments for more “bang for the buck.”

As you navigate a generational investment in U.S. competitiveness, we urge you to include Main Street in any infrastructure package. We look forward to working with you to get this critical program across the finish line. Main Street depends on it.

Sincerely,

Acuity Brands Lighting
AESP
Alliance to Save Energy
Association of Energy Engineers
California Efficiency + Demand Management Council
Center for Energy and Environment
Chelan County PUD
Dynamic Energy Strategies
Environment America
Equipment Controls Company
Erthe Energy Solutions
Facility Solutions Group Inc.
FCI Management
Franklin Energy
GridPoint, Inc.
International Copper Association
International Window Film Association
Knauf Insulation
Krug Architects and CHP-Funder.com
Lime Energy
Meguire Whitney
Metrus Energy
Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
NAESCO
National Grid
NH Office of the Consumer Advocate
Northwest Energy Efficiency Council
Puget Sound Energy
Rexel Energy Solutions
Seattle City Light
Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors National Association (SMACNA)
SMUD
Snohomish Public Utility District
Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEET)
Trane Technologies Company LLC
Uplight
Willdan

Cc: Speaker Nancy Pelosi, U.S. House of Representatives
Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable John Yarmuth, Chairman, Committee on the Budget, U.S. House
of Representatives