

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We write as a diverse group of companies and organizations working in the U.S. energy efficiency industry, which with nearly 2.4 million jobs is among the largest energy employers in the nation and by far the largest clean energy sector. Fully 70 percent of those jobs are in construction and manufacturing, and these workers – along with the broad benefits that energy efficiency delivers to our society – are at grave risk from the economic shock resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Congress and the Administration rightly focused on the immediate impacts of this crisis in its initial COVID-19 relief legislation. However, as the fallout ripples through the economy, we urge you to take decisive steps to restore economic activity and rebuild our industries that currently are suffering massive layoffs and sharply curtailed investment that will lead to even more disruption for the foreseeable future.

We already are seeing homeowners, utilities and businesses delay or cancel energy efficiency projects. Thousands of contracting businesses that employ hundreds of thousands of workers across the country are no longer able to access homes and businesses where they would otherwise be working. This is cascading through the supply chain to the manufacture of insulation, windows, HVAC equipment and other building components. Vast swaths of the efficiency economy could be shuttered for the foreseeable future without strong policy measures.

In addition to putting people back to work, our economic response to this crisis should also prioritize investments that pave the way for a healthier, more sustainable and more resilient future for American families and businesses. This is particularly true in the energy sector, and energy efficiency has the potential to help us meet all of those goals.

With efficiency investments, we can pave the way for lower energy bills for households and consumers struggling to pay bills, and we can lower government spending for decades in public buildings and infrastructure projects. We can also create healthier communities with less pollution, including greenhouse gas emissions.

We know from the Great Recession that policy can work to stimulate activity. Expanded tax incentives for homeowner efficiency improvements in 2009 and 2010, for example, stimulated significant residential contracting activity that, in turn, prevented layoffs and closures at factories making windows,

heating and cooling equipment, insulation and other products. Expanded investment in the Weatherization Assistance Program under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) weatherized roughly 1 million homes from 2010 to 2012, permanently lowering utility bills for homeowners while putting contractors to work. Efficiency investments like these and others – including in state and local activities through the State Energy Program, or in public buildings and other mission critical facilities, or in residential and commercial buildings – could go a long way in getting the economy moving again while make significant progress in addressing infrastructure needs.

We look forward to working with the Administration and Congress to ensure that we build on that success following this crisis to address the concerns above and regain momentum for putting this important sector of the economy back on track.

Should you have any questions or want to discuss this further please contact Ben Evans with the Alliance to Save Energy at bevans@ase.org.

Sincerely,

Acuity Brands
Advanced Energy Economy
Air Conditioning Contractors of America
Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute
Alliance to Save Energy
Ameresco
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
American Institute of Architects
ASHRAE
Building Performance Association
Building Performance Institute
Copper Development Association
DuPont
E4TheFuture
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Federal Performance Contracting Coalition
Institute for Market Transformation
Intel Corporation
Knauf Insulation
Metrus Energy
Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
National Association for State Community Services Programs
National Association of Energy Services Companies
National Association of State Energy Officials
NRDC
Schneider Electric
Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association
Signify
Stella Group

U.S. Green Building Council

CC:

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Greg Walden, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

The Honorable Joe Manchin, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman, Committee on Finance

The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Committee on Finance

The Honorable Richard Neal, Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means

The Honorable Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairman, Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman, Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations