At Eastern Connecticut
State University

Testimony of William Leahy
Institute for Sustainable Energy at Eastern Connecticut State University
Before the
Appropriations, Energy and Technology and Human Services Committees
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Good afternoon Senator Harp, Senator Fonfara, Senator Doyle, Representative Gerogosian, Representative Nardello, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations, Energy and Technology and Human Services Committees. My name is William Leahy and I am the Chief Operating Officer for the Institute for Sustainable Energy (ISE) at Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU) and I am speaking on behalf of President Elsa Nunez. I am here today to speak about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Allocation Plan and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 State Energy Program Formula Grants Application.

As stated in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Weatherization Assistance Program Proposed Connecticut State Plan, this is not just about weatherization, caulk and weather-stripping program, but a plan "...meant to stimulate the economy by creating new weatherization training programs and projects that lead to new and sustainable green technology jobs." In two and one-half years, when the stimulus funds have been spent, we will need to ask, "What have we accomplished?" Did we make permanent improvements in the triple bottom line – the economy, people's lives and the environment? The priorities of the ARRA are clear:

- Put people to work in Family Supporting, Career Directed, Sustainable Jobs in the private sector.
- Stimulate the economy by encouraging the development of new sustainable businesses and industries.
- Reduce our dependence on foreign oil which strengthens our national security.
- Encourage the development, production, sale and installation of innovative sustainable technologies and renewable energy.
- Reduce the burden on home owners, renters and tax payers of heating energy inefficient buildings.
- Improve the environment by reducing pollution and green house gases.

ARRA provides a unique opportunity to do more than provide temporary employment and job training, but instead provides skill development, as well as career, business and personal development training. The benefits should last well beyond the duration of the federal funding. The stimulus package was based on studies that encouraged job creation opportunities which would make a significant and lasting change in our economy and society. Green Jobs traditionally offer above average wages and create opportunities to people of all ages, gender and race. The training should be open to all, targeting not only the unemployed and under-employed, but also at-risk youth, welfare-to-work moms, and those recently released from incarceration.

To bring the economy back on course, we need to create an educational and skill development progression that supports upward mobility. For example:

> Training may begin with the entry level weatherization certification program, complete with classes on building science and material selection, supervised application experience in a lab, on-the-job apprenticeship, culminating with testing for national certification. But it shouldn't stop there. Successful candidates should be encouraged to continue training to achieve certification as envelope specialists, capable of window and door replacement and ceiling and wall insulation. These two programs would provide salable skills that would permit a participant to work for a building contractor specializing in energy improvements. If we offer a certification course in energy auditing and analysis, the candidate could go on to become a weatherization program or utility energy auditor, a project estimator or inspector, a crew supervisor, a building materials salesperson, or even a commissioning agent. If we provide opportunities to take business development courses, the participant could become a home improvement contractor specializing in energy efficiency. With additional training in building mechanical and electrical systems, the participant could become a buildings operator or certified energy manager, with the potential to work for a school system, housing authority and real estate management firm. The goal is to provide training that leads to a family supporting, career directed, sustainable job in the private sector.

To support this program, ISE has helped facilitate a partnership between the CT Community Colleges and the CT Technical High Schools. The community colleges typically are responsive to changing job requirements and providing both business and certification training. On the other hand, the CT Technical High Schools are known for their technology laboratories and success in producing job ready technical graduates. These two educational organizations must, however, coordinate their programs and activities to be responsive to the job market and the needs of multiple stakeholders, including the Department of Social Services, the Department of Labor, Department of Economic and Community Development, the Community Action Agencies, the Workforce Investment Boards, the utilities and the private sector business community.

By preparing participants for nationally recognized certification, training will be easily transferable, not limited to just meeting local task oriented program needs. The minimal training requirements and energy audit for federal weatherization compliance should be the lowest common denominator for all participants, not the training program goal. Progress toward achieving private sector careers and small business development should be the goal. Recognized national standards and certification are available for most Green Collar Jobs, including weatherization specialist, envelope specialists, energy auditor, commissioning agent, health and safety inspectors, renewable site analyst, renewable equipment installer, green building certifiers, certified building operator, and certified energy manager. The ARRA funding limits for the low income weatherization program has a higher funding level and a lower cost/benefit threshold than past programs, encouraging more comprehensive improvements in participating households. As a result, heating system equipment replacement and building repairs will most likely be offered. This will necessitate energy efficiency and green building re-training for contractors in the recognized trades, such as carpentry, electrical, HVAC and plumbing, who will be responsible for making major, more capital intensive improvements as part of the program. Both the CT Community Colleges and the CT Technical High Schools are already developing programs to address these technologies and efficiency strategies.

The Institute for Sustainable Energy (ISE) at Eastern Connecticut State University has the capabilities of assisting DSS and other state agencies in the coordination of this massive expansion of our training capabilities needed to create the ARRA Green Job workforce. Currently, ISE provides local school systems with energy management training for their maintenance staffs, energy code training for local building officials, Green Building training to boards of education and school building committees, as well as teacher workshops on climate change and energy efficiency. As the Chief Operating Officer of the Institute, I have an advance degree in curriculum development for technical education, as well as an advance degree in business. I am a Certified Energy Manager through the Association of Energy Engineers and a LEED Accredited Professional through the US Green Building Council. My work experience includes twelve years of teaching and supervision of technical education, twenty-one years in energy efficiency program development and implementation with national recognition for several programs, and nearly seven years as chief operating officer of ISE, which has received numerous awards at the federal and regional levels for its initiatives, including national EnergyStar Partner of the Year for Excellence in Energy Education in 2004. I am also the Green Energy/Green Building committee co-chair of the B-Green 2020 initiative in Bridgeport.

The ISE could provide services, such as research and select the most appropriate nationally recognized certification standards and secure the rights to utilize that certification for the range of positions needed for the Weatherization Assistance Program; develop the curriculum and regionally appropriate educational materials to support training and certification of participants; provide coordination of the educational service providers, including the community colleges, technical high schools, and outside training agents; coordinate the training resources, schedules and sessions to meet the workforce requirements and timelines and develop and submit timely reports on training program activity and progress. In addition, ISE could support regular meetings of a stakeholder council necessary to facilitate open communication between all the participating agencies and organizations. As an administrative department within the Connecticut State University System, the cost of these services to DSS would be based on the recovery of staff salaries and benefits, transportation, supplies and overhead costs for time and materials dedicated to this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.