

Senate Special Committee on Energy
Hearing on the Weatherization Program
April 2, 2015

Craig Moore, Vice President of Planning and Development
Tlingit-Haida Regional Housing Authority
5446 Jenkins, Juneau AK 99802
907-780-6868

Good afternoon. My name is Craig Moore. I'm the Vice President of Tlingit-Haida Regional Housing Authority (THRHA) in Juneau. I oversee the Weatherization Program at the Housing Authority, as well as new construction and rehabs.

I want to thank Senator Micciche and Senator Bishop, Co-Chairs of the Senate Special Committee on Energy, and other members of the committee for the opportunity to speak to you today about the State's Weatherization Program, and the positive impact it has brought to our region.

THRHA serves rural communities in our SE Alaska region, from Yakutat in the north, to Hydaburg in the south, and many communities in between. Few programs that I have been involved with at the Housing Authority are as important to the well-being of our rural communities as the Weatherization Program. Since 2008, THRHA has received funding to weatherize 915 homes in our region. Yet there are still many that need this service. At an average cost per unit of \$11,000 per home, this is a significant infusion into our local economy, and has benefited our communities in far-reaching ways.

It has reduced heating costs for our residents. Most of our rural homes were not built to modern codes. They were poorly insulated, with high air leakage, resulting in high heat loss. Our energy assessors find many older rural homes are in the 1 to 2 Star range. They are typically heated with fuel oil. Some are heated with wood. There is no natural gas heating in SE. We find there are huge opportunities for energy saving just by airsealing against heat loss, adding insulation to floors and ceilings, servicing and tuning heating systems, and in some cases replacing failed or very inefficient heating systems with new, energy efficient systems. We can often raise these old homes to 3 or 4 Star ratings with our limited budget.

It has provided healthier homes for our families. Our trained assessors use blower door tests, combustion analyzers, backdraft testing, IR cameras, fan flow measurements, and their trained eyes to test and identify health hazards in the homes. We then take measures to reduce health hazards from carbon monoxide, mold and mildew, poor indoor air quality, and fire hazards. This program is one of the most effective for providing healthier, safer homes.

It has provided much-needed jobs in our economically-depressed communities. These aren't glamorous jobs, they are hard work. But they provide welcome income for our young men and women. It helps them support their homes and subsistence lifestyles, and helps provide food and affordable shelter for their families and elders.

It has provided economic benefits to local businesses. Materials are purchased from local vendors. Contractors are hired for many weatherization services. Transportation companies benefit. Local stores benefit from the cash infusion from wage earners. All this helps sustain the local economies.

It has raised the level of knowledge in our workforce. Our crews receive training in building science, energy efficient construction, indoor air quality, and health factors in our built environment. Workers are trained to identify and seal heat loss bypasses in attics, floors and walls. They are trained to test and repair defective heating systems, and to call in heating contractor when failed systems need to be replaced. They test for adequate ventilation and install high quality fans for good indoor air quality. These skills and knowledge are invaluable in the villages, a benefit that carries forward into the future.

It helps slow the outmigration of village families. The jobs give young men and women in our villages the chance to earn good incomes and gain self-respect while they improve the quality of life for their elders. It makes their homes more affordable to operate. These all affect their decisions to stay in their beloved communities and not move to the larger urban hubs.

In Summary, I see all of these benefits of the Weatherization Program on a regular basis, and I am thankful to be a part of a program that positively affects so many people. All Alaskans know the tough budget decisions that the Legislature is facing this session. We urge you to consider the cost-benefits of the Weatherization Program, and the enormous beneficial impacts it has on our lower income Alaskan residents.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of this excellent program.