



Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development

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June 24, 2013

The Honorable Al Franken
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Energy
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James E. Risch
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Energy
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Franken and Ranking Member Risch:

On behalf of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I write to express our support of The Nonprofit Energy Efficiency Act (S. 717) to be heard before the Energy Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on Tuesday, June 25, 2013.

Introduced by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and John Hoeven (R-ND), the Nonprofit Energy Efficiency Act will establish a pilot program at the U.S. Department of Energy to provide financial grants to non-profit organizations to help make the buildings they own and operate more energy efficient. Under the proposal, \$50 million would be authorized for Fiscal Years 2014-2017 with non-profits eligible to apply for grants up to 50% of the total cost of the energy efficiency program—up to \$200,000 per project.

The breadth of the Catholic Church's institutions includes thousands of schools, parishes, hospitals and other organizations that serve people and communities in need. Our institutions would benefit greatly from this important pilot program meant to assist non-profits to become more energy-efficient and environmentally responsible.

As Catholics, we are called to care for God's creation and to be stewards of the environment and the earth's resources. As the U.S. bishops insist in their statement *Renewing the Earth*, "As individuals, as institutions, as a people, we need a change of heart to preserve and protect the planet for our children and for generations yet unborn."

Currently there are no programs to incentivize the non-profit community to invest in the energy efficiency of their hundreds-of-thousands of buildings across the country. If enacted, S. 717 will enable America's schools, youth centers, houses of worship, hospitals, museums, community centers, and more to reduce operating costs, invest more in the communities they serve and lessen their impact on the environment, all while helping to conserve energy.

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We thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this necessary pilot program that will provide an important pathway for nonprofits serving our communities to become more energy-efficient. We hope you will join us in supporting S. 717, The Nonprofit Energy Efficiency Act.

Sincerely,

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Most Reverend Stephen E. Blaire
Bishop of Stockton
Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice
and Human Development