

National Association of Home Builders

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February 3, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

On behalf of the over 175,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I am writing to urge your support for the comprehensive home energy retrofit program being developed as part of pending job creation legislation. If crafted appropriately, this program has the potential to create thousands of jobs for home builders, remodelers and contractors. Further, it will jump-start manufacturing and retail sales of appliances, heating/air-conditioning equipment and building materials, shrink consumers' energy bills and improve energy efficiency in the existing home stock.

A comprehensive home retrofit program must include all qualified, properly-trained contractors. Restrictive language constraining the pool of eligible workers will significantly extend the implementation time for the program and blunt benefits for increasing jobs or improving energy efficiency. NAHB believes that the problem of energy loss in existing homes is too big, and job losses in construction are too dire, to limit in any way the participation of qualified, highly-skilled, and available workers. As well, a broad population of eligible workers means greater potential for job creation.

Workers who wish to participate in a national home energy retrofit program must also have access to diverse training and certification options. One option that NAHB would urge the Senate to include is the Home Builders Institute (HBI). HBI, working with Job Corps, the Department of Labor (DOL), and NAHB, developed a training course on weatherization and energy efficiency upgrades in existing homes. This curriculum includes 40 hours of classroom and hands-on training for apprenticeship up to Master Energy Analyst. It is designed to reach professionals that are going into the field (e.g., vocational schools) and contractors who have worked in the field, but require additional training. HBI is already a partner with the DOL for many residential workforce programs. It is logical that HBI be recognized equally alongside other training programs for workforce development.

As the Senate crafts legislation to jump start job creation, it is important to address the dramatic unemployment in the residential construction industry. An open, inclusive national home retrofit program is a great way to put home builders, remodelers and contractors back to work. It can simultaneously save money for

consumers and improve energy efficiency in the least efficient housing stock: older homes. NAHB and our members look forward to working with the Senate on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Stanton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the first name being a large, stylized capital 'J'.

Joseph M. Stanton
Senior Vice President and Chief Lobbyist
Government Affairs