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March 6, 2023

The Honorable Mark McConkey, Chairman  
House Public Works and Highways Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
33 N. State Street  
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Representative McConkey and members of the Committee,

The Department of Energy's (NH DOE) sole request in the Capital Budget (HB 25) is to replace the software system that manages the Fuel Assistance Program (FAP) and Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). This request is to extend the lapse of an existing authorization of \$316,000 and for an additional appropriation of \$568,000. Both are 100% federal funds.

The software system in question serves as the backbone of FAP and WAP, managing everything in the respective programs from income screening, client information, benefit determination, award letter creation, payments, and federal reporting requirements. While enrollments fluctuate from year to year, FAP averages roughly 24,000 households per year and WAP roughly 300 households per year.

The existing software system is more than twenty years old, increasingly fragile, and is no longer meeting the needs of the programs, especially with ever increasing federal reporting requirements for FAP and WAP. Routine data requests needed to complete federal reports often take days to complete. A failure of this software system would make it nearly impossible to process assistance applications and pay out benefits to clients.

A new software system would allow for greater efficiencies in staff time, for the Community Action Agencies and NH DOE, leading to better and quicker service to the people of the state of New Hampshire. It will also allow NH DOE to manage the programs more effectively by having greater and more frequent access to data and program metrics. Lastly, by instituting this new software, we will dramatically reduce the likelihood of catastrophic software failure.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jared Chicoine", with a long, sweeping underline.

Jared Chicoine  
Commissioner