

April 9, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Ranking Member  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Walden:

We, contractors, small business owners, and other members of the building performance industry, are writing to urge you to support the Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Development Act of 2019. This legislation would create a comprehensive, nationwide program to improve education and training for jobs in energy-related industries, including residential energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofits, in order to increase the number of skilled workers qualified to fill these jobs. We urge you to support this legislation to address the need for a robust and qualified workforce in order to fill the employment needs of the growing residential energy efficiency and clean energy industries.

The energy efficiency and clean energy industries represent a fast-growing workforce. The energy efficiency industry employs approximately 2.25 million Americans and is adding more jobs than any other energy sector.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, these jobs are local—nearly all U.S. counties have energy efficiency jobs—and because much of the work is “on the ground” doing installation or maintenance of energy efficiency products and technologies, these are jobs that cannot be outsourced.

Jobs in energy-efficient lighting, HVAC, insulation and air sealing, and energy management technology are available, but trained professionals are often in short supply. There is a real need to ramp up implementation of workforce programs that prepare workers—including women, veterans, and minority groups—for the jobs which need to be filled.

One of the main pillars of the Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Development Act of 2019 is an energy workforce grant program, which would provide assistance to businesses in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries that are seeking to educate and train new hires and existing employees. A large majority of energy efficiency businesses across the country have fewer than 20 employees.<sup>2</sup> Small businesses like these are the backbone of our country, but they are also the ones that are in need of assistance when it comes to making new hires and investing in the education and training of their existing employees. By covering the wages for these workers during the time they are receiving training, this grant program would significantly help

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<sup>1</sup> <https://e4thefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/EE-Jobs-in-America-2018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

small and medium sized businesses invest in their employees, allowing workers to expand their skill set, do better work, and earn higher wages in the long run.

With more resources to provide training for these high-quality jobs, especially for small businesses that cannot afford the training, the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries can continue to grow. This legislation will result in more American workers who are equipped to provide energy efficiency and renewable energy products and services and whose work will reduce energy waste in homes and buildings across the country. Importantly, the legislation would give priority to eligible businesses that recruit employees from local communities, minorities, women, foster children, persons who are transitioning from fossil energy sector jobs, and veterans; and provide trainees with the opportunity to obtain real-world experience.

We urge you to support the Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Development Act of 2019, which will help advance workforce development for a new energy economy, economic growth, and energy security in our nation and help to ensure that every community across the country has access to opportunities in the growing energy efficiency and clean energy industries.

Sincerely,

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