



July 14, 2006

Dear Chairman Davis and Members of the Missouri Energy Task Force:

As you prepare your final report for the Governor's consideration, AARP Missouri respectfully requests that you include a recommendation for a significant increase in the budget allocation towards the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). AARP Missouri concurs with the recommendation made to the Task Force by the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program Policy Advisory Council and would urge you to consider allocating up to fifteen percent of Missouri's share of federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) dollars to the Weatherization Assistance Program in our state.

I understand the Task Force has been provided information and data about the Weatherization Assistance Program and the benefits it provides to those low-income Missourians able to get the services. However, a lack of funding forces far too many to go on waiting lists for one, two, or even five years for the Weatherization assistance they desperately need to help them manage their home energy burden. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number of these Missourians are seniors who are often forced to choose between paying high heating bills and other necessities, such as food and medicine.

In appointing the Energy Task Force, the Governor emphasized the importance of working towards solutions that will help our state become more energy efficient. Weatherization has a good track record of proven gains in energy efficiency. Furthermore, it provides the low-income individuals who receive it with long-term relief from expensive energy bills and it improves the home energy efficiency of the state's overall housing stock. Truly, a greater allocation of Missouri's state budget should be steered towards investing in a reduction of the need for energy assistance dollars in the future.

AARP has consistently supported federal funding increases to the LIHEAP program and applauded Governor Blunt for increasing the FY 2006 funding for Missouri's Utilicare Program. We believe both programs should be directed towards a balanced approach of both direct assistance and weatherization dollars.

A few years ago, the stakeholders on the Committee to Keep Missouri Warm voted overwhelmingly to recommend that fifteen percent of any state Utilicare dollars be directed towards weatherization assistance. Moreover, every other state in the nine state region surrounding Missouri has taken a balanced approach and are allocating from nine to fifteen percent of their LIHEAP dollars towards Weatherization programs. AARP Missouri urges you to recommend that the Governor adopt a similarly balanced approach.

We appreciate your consideration and the important work you have done as a member of the Governor's Energy Task Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John McDonald". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

John McDonald  
State Director