



**TESTIMONY OF KANSAS HOUSING RESOURCES CORPORATION
TO THE SENATE UTILITIES COMMITTEE
PRESENTED BY KHRC PRESIDENT STEPHEN R. WEATHERFORD
JANUARY 26, 2006**

Mister Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee, Kansas Housing Resources Corporation (KHRC) appreciates the opportunity to testify before you concerning the Governor's energy efficiency and affordability initiatives.

The State of Kansas and its citizens are facing challenging economic times, further intensified by the sharp rise of energy costs. It is imperative that resources be identified and innovative solutions be implemented to meet the needs of our citizens and strengthen the Kansas economy.

Governor's WARM Kansas Initiative

Earlier this month, Governor Kathleen Sebelius presented her WARM (Weatherization Assistance, Retrofitting and Maintenance) Kansas initiative, supporting the ideas of "energy efficiency and affordability" for the low-income citizens of Kansas. The initiative included the Attic Insulation Program, the Home Improvement Energy Efficiency Loan Program, and utility assistance grants to help low-income Kansans with high energy bills.

Attic Insulation Program

The Governor has included in her budget request \$2 million for the Attic Insulation Program, which will focus upon installation of attic insulation in low-income housing units across Kansas. The intent of this program is to reduce the cooling/heating costs of the home, allowing low-income individuals and families to use the savings for other critical needs. Local Weatherization Assistance Programs will be responsible for implementing this project.

The Kansas Weatherization Program utilizes federal funds to make repairs to low-income families' homes that will lower their energy use and make their homes safer, more affordable, and more comfortable. The program serves families at or below 60 percent of the state median income. Eight agencies in nine areas of the state operate weatherization programs (see

attachments). Each agency recruits and processes applications for service, determines eligibility, and conducts home inspections to determine the needs of each home. Then the agency either performs the needed work or contracts it locally. Kansas Housing Resources Corporation monitors sub-grantee administration of the funds as well as conducts quality control reviews of the completed work.

Currently, 1,528 families are on waiting lists for weatherization, and it is estimated it will take up to three years to address these needs, using federal funding alone. Having a waiting list in each of the weatherization service areas makes a strong statement for the popularity of this program, but this also highlights the essential role of the program in helping Kansans in need. Leveraging the existing federal funding for weatherization with the Attic Insulation Program will allow whole-house weatherization for more than 2,000 homes across Kansas in one year, averaging 20 percent in energy savings that extends up to ten years.

Home Improvements Energy Efficiency Loan Program

The Governor proposed \$2 million for the Home Improvements Energy Efficiency Loan Program, which will provide low interest loans to Kansans whose family income is at or below 80 percent of the median income for their community. KHRC is working with lenders to implement this program. The program's goal is to enable homeowners to make energy efficiency home improvements. Through this program, individuals will apply through participating lenders, and KHRC will fund half of the loaned amount, up to a maximum of \$7,500 from this revolving loan fund. Improvements may be made to heating and cooling units, ducts, doors, water heaters, and windows. Insulation may be added, and the home can be better sealed against the weather for more energy efficiency.

Conclusion

The Kansas Housing Resources Corporation believes that the Governor's initiatives are beneficial programs. They are of great value to the State and its citizens. These programs generate safer, more affordable, and more comfortable housing for the citizens of Kansas. Thank you very much for your consideration in taking these important issues to the Senate floor.

Homes Weatherized by Kansas Weatherization Assistance Program, Apr. 2002-Dec. 2005



- Northwest Kansas Community Action Program
- North Central Regional Planning Commission
- Harvest America Corporation
- Southeast Kansas Community Action Program
- South Central Kansas Economic Development District
- East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corp. & Harvest America Corp.
- Johnson County Human Services & Aging
- Community Action, Inc.

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