



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY  
LANSING



PHILLIP D. ROOS  
DIRECTOR

March 22, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Amy O'Leary, Executive Director  
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments  
1001 Woodward Avenue, Suite 1400  
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Amy O'Leary:

We are pleased to indicate the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's (EGLE) support for the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' (SEMCOG's) application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Program Implementation Grants to lead a Building Decarbonization Program in Southeast Michigan.

While there are a number of building improvement programs and incentives available to Southeast Michigan, there are considerable gaps and funding shortfalls. SEMCOG's Building Decarbonization initiative has been designed to leverage these programs, bringing them to more residential and municipal buildings, and integrating them into comprehensive decarbonization plans. This approach will accelerate the success of our ongoing initiatives and ensure existing funding sources are well used. Most importantly, it will result in greater reductions in energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and energy cost burdens than could be achieved by smaller programs on their own. The program will be unique in the following ways. It will:

- **Reduce energy cost burdens through comprehensive retrofits.** The program will develop a unique and comprehensive plan for residents across the region. This includes coordinating multiple contractors and multiple stages of work rather than providing only piecemeal improvements. Ensuring the work is comprehensive, accessible, and well-funded will ensure participating building owners realize long-term utilities savings, reducing energy cost burdens in our region.
- **Add capacity to local governments and make it easier for building owners.** The program will provide "energy advisers," who will evaluate each building's initial condition and energy efficiency, create a unique "pathway to carbon neutrality" for that building, and then work with the owner to schedule and fund as much of the work as possible. This will reduce the effort and expertise required from municipal agencies and building owners, while still ensuring the work is done correctly. Much needed funding and support will also be allocated for municipal buildings.

- **Leverage existing funding.** Energy advisers will identify and draw upon existing incentives and rebates to cover the work, first. The CPRG funds will be used to fill gaps in these programs to ensure that all existing funding sources are optimized. This further aids capacity constrained local government agencies and builds upon the workforce development efforts already in place rather than competing.

SEMCOG, as the regional planning organization and designated lead local air quality planning agency under the federal Clean Air Act, is well-positioned to lead this work in the region. Its established relationships in the region and state will allow it to coordinate planning and reporting and leverage existing committees to distribute a portion of the funds.

EGLE recognizes that this work will directly benefit residents in Southeast Michigan. The goals of SEMCOG's Building Decarbonization Program align with the MI Healthy Climate Plan, Michigan's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition toward economy-wide carbon neutrality by 2050. EGLE leads the implementation of the MI Healthy Climate Plan and numerous energy-related programs. We strongly support this proposal and are looking forward to working with SEMCOG to see how the lessons learned from this program can help inform other initiatives across Michigan.

We are enthusiastic about partnering with SEMCOG and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through this pivotal program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cory Connolly', written in a cursive style.

Cory Connolly  
Chief Climate Officer  
Office of Climate and Energy  
517-881-8972

cc: Phillip D. Roos, Director, EGLE  
James Clift, Deputy Director, EGLE  
Julia Field, EGLE