



Warren C. Evans
Wayne County Executive

March 19, 2024

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

To the Attention of the Evaluation Committee:

We are pleased to indicate the Charter County of Wayne's support for the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments' (SEMCOG's) application to the US-EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Program Implementation Grants to lead a Building Decarbonization program in Southeast Michigan.

While several building improvement programs and incentives are 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 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 utility 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 ensuring the work is done correctly. Much-needed funding and support will also be allocated for municipal buildings.
- **Leverage existing funding.** Energy advisers will first identify and draw upon existing incentives and rebates to cover the work. The CPRG funds will fill gaps in these programs to optimize all

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existing funding sources. This further aids capacity-constrained local government agencies and builds upon the existing workforce development efforts 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.

Wayne County recognizes that this work will directly benefit many of our most vulnerable residents and ensure that programs offered across our 43 communities through organizations like Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency are made even more accessible to our residents. In this way, SEMCOG's program will leverage work we in Wayne County are already doing and help it go further.

Wayne County is enthusiastic about working with SEMCOG and providing support to implement the program. Wayne County is home to Southeast Michigan's most diverse and most concentrated Justice 40 populations. Our diversity is our strength and the opportunity. According to the CPRG-funded and recently completed Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory, Wayne County also carries the region's heaviest GHG emissions burden. The County embraces this opportunity to address job creation, workforce development, and the emissions associated with building operations in Wayne County at both the residential and municipal levels. We understand that SEMCOG is structuring the program to ensure Wayne County and the entire region will benefit from the work completed, and that this work will reduce energy cost burdens and improve the health, resilience, and quality of life for residents in our community and across the region.

Wayne County looks forward to collaborating with SEMCOG and other regional partners through this grant.

Respectfully submitted,



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