



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

220 NORTH MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 8645
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48107-8645

March 20, 2024

To the US EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Review Committee:

On behalf of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, I am pleased to indicate Washtenaw County'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 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 building.
- **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.

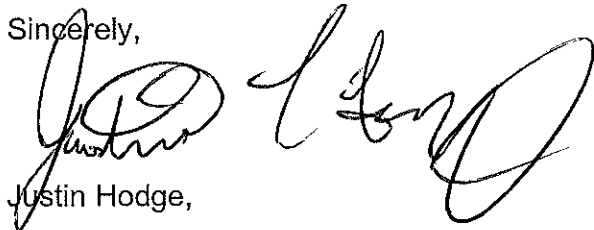
SEMCOG, as the regional planning organization and designated lead local air-quality planning agency under the federal Clean Air Act, is well positioned to lead this work in the region. Its established relationships in the region and State will allow it to coordinate planning and reporting, and leverage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

In 2022, Washtenaw County adopted the first county level climate action plan in the State of Michigan. Our plan, Resilient Washtenaw, sets a path to achieve our county's ambitious climate action goals, which include carbon neutrality for our organization by 2030 and community by 2035. We see opportunities such as this as critical to our ability to achieve our goals and to prepare with our community for the impacts of climate change.

Washtenaw County is willing and interested in working with SEMCOG and providing support to implement the program. We understand that SEMCOG is structuring the program to ensure Washtenaw 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.

Moving forward, the County is looking forward to collaborating with SEMCOG and other regional partners through this grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Hodge", written over a horizontal line.

Justin Hodge,

Commissioner, District 5

Chair, Board of Commissioners