



June 9, 2006

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
Subcommittee on Energy and Water,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry M. Reid
Subcommittee on Energy and Water,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Domenici and Senator Reid:

As you prepare for consideration of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2007, H.R. 5427, we respectfully ask for your assistance on two vital issues of interest to American seniors.

AARP strongly opposes the Administration's proposed reduction in funding for the Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). This proposal for FY 2007 reflects a dramatic reversal in the administration's commitment to increase weatherization funding to \$1.4 billion over 10 years. More than 5.3 million homes have been weatherized since this cost-effective program began 27 years ago. Older persons occupy an estimated one-third of these dwellings. Over 27 million homes remain eligible for such assistance. WAP resources are like "preventive medicine" ensuring permanent energy health for homes without the need for additional funding from year to year.

The House-passed bill provides \$250 million for WAP, the same level provided for FY 2006. We urge you to reject the President's recommended decrease in funding for this critical program which delivers lasting benefits to the nation's low income vulnerable citizens.

AARP also strongly opposes policy changes proposed by the Department of Energy (DOE) that would no longer permit contractor employees to participate in defined benefit pension plans or medical benefit plans similar to those available to more than 65 percent of the American work force, including all federal employees.

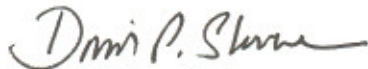
The implementation of these proposals would undermine the retirement security of contractor employees and the needs of their families for access to quality health care at a reasonable price. This effort to force private employers to change benefit plan structures represents an unwarranted and unprecedented intrusion of the federal government into local labor markets. Private sector employers should be provided the freedom and flexibility to design employee benefit plans that will enable the firms to attract and retain an effective and efficient workforce.

Letter re Energy and Water FY 2007 Appropriations
June 9, 2006
Page Two

We urge you and the members of the Subcommittee on Energy and Water to include a provision in the energy and water appropriations bill for FY 2007 that would prohibit DOE from spending appropriated funds to implement the new policy to alter the benefits available to the contractor workforce until Congress has the opportunity to hold hearings on the proposed changes.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me or have your staff contact Timothy Gearan or Frank Toohey of our Federal Affairs staff at (202) 434-3800.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David P. Sloane".

David P. Sloane
Senior Managing Director
Government Relations and Advocacy