

HOPE for HOMES Act of 2020

Background:

As soon as the nation began shutting down in response to the coronavirus pandemic, America’s energy efficiency workforce—the biggest energy workforce in the nation—began to dissolve. A new report from E2 and E4TheFuture found that since the start of the pandemic, the energy efficiency sector shed over 413,500 jobs and is projected to lose many more if immediate action is not taken. Residential energy efficiency has been particularly hard hit, as residential contractors’ line of work depends on physical visits to homes. Support for these contractor companies that face the difficult decision of laying off employees in order to save their businesses is vital. Pivoting focus toward helping these small businesses re-hire and invest in this workforce to maximize telework productivity, and prepare the sector for a new stage of significant advancement of America’s existing home infrastructure, has become a priority of the essence. As the country reopens, investments in these measures are critical to ensure contractors across the country have equal access to training in spite of discrepancies between state reopening orders.

Bill Summary:

The bill employs a two-pronged approach of both immediate and long-term initiatives to save the residential energy efficiency contractor industry from hardships incurred as a result of COVID-19. Through the establishment of grants for online workforce training, residential contractors will immediately gain access to online training designed to prepare them to conduct comprehensive home energy efficiency retrofits. These grants will allow contracting businesses to re-hire and re-invest in their employees during the economic downturn. The Home Energy Savings Retrofit rebate program would then act as a stimulus – encouraging homeowners to undertake energy retrofits of their homes and driving demand for these highly trained workers. This will result in the creation of local jobs than cannot be outsourced, and a massive upgrade to this nation’s residential housing stock.

How It Works:

HOPE Contractor Training	HOMES Rebate Program	Job Creation
The Contractor “Home On-line Performance-based Energy-efficiency” (HOPE) Training would provide immediate support to contractor businesses, with \$500 million to help companies pay their contractors to undertake online training to advance their understanding of home performance. The online training qualification is designed to serve as a pathway to participate in the HOMES rebate program. Because the training is available online, contractors from all states would have access to these courses and would be able to invest in workforce development.	HOPE would be paired with a \$6 Billion Home Owner Managing Savings Act (HOMES) to be authorized through 2025 (or until expended) that would create incentives for homeowners to invest in energy efficiency improvements through a multi-part rebate program to support states with a diversity of building stock, energy program expertise, and contractor workforce skills and help States to advance the efficiency, health, and safety of their residences.	Contracting jobs are inherently local, and most residential contracting companies are small businesses with fewer than 25 employees. HOPE for HOMES will spur the creation of a highly trained local contractor workforce that cannot be outsourced. It will also generate jobs up the supply chain in manufacturing, distribution, and retail sales of energy efficient technologies and products.

Members Cosponsoring the Bill:

SENATE BILL

Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE)
Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)

HOUSE BILL

Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT)
Rep. David McKinley (R-WV)
Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY)
Rep. André Carson (D-IN)
Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-CA)
Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT)

Organizations Who Support the Bill:

Advanced Energy Economy
Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA)
Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI)
Alliance to Save Energy
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE)
Association for Energy Affordability, Inc.
Basement Health Association
Building Performance Association (BPA)
Building Performance Institute
Clean Energy Business Network
Connecticut Efficiency for All
E4TheFuture
Energy Efficiency Alliance – New Jersey
High Performance Insulation Professionals (HPIP)
Institute for Market Transformation
Insulation Contractors Association of America (ICAA)
Johnson Controls
Keystone Energy Efficiency Alliance
Knauf Insulation
Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC LLC
National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)
National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP)
National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO)
North American Insulation Manufacturers Association (NAIMA)
NRDC
PACE Nation
Pearl Certification
Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP)
U.S. Green Building Council
VEIC