



29 November 2010
Public Comments to Energy Policy Council

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing public comments today.

My name is Dr. Kathy Shea. I am the Director of North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light, and a practicing physician. NCIPL is a non-profit program of the North Carolina Council of churches which works with communities of all faiths throughout NC to address the causes and consequences of global climate change and promote practical solutions through education, outreach and public policy advocacy. As one of the 39 state affiliates of national Interfaith Power and Light, we seek to mobilize a religious response to global warming in congregations through the promotion of renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation.

I am also a physician with over 3 decades of clinical experience, the last half of which has included working in the area of children's environmental health. In this capacity, I have come to believe that climate change represents the gravest threat to environmental public health in the world today, and perhaps the gravest threat humanity has ever faced. For the past 3 years, I have concentrated my extra-clinical efforts on helping to define the various aspects of this threat and build awareness and professional capacity to respond through mitigation and adaptation to maximally protect current and future generations from harms related to climate change.

It is with these two voices that I come before you today to urge you to support a public benefit fund operated by a third part administrator as described in the NC Save\$ Energy proposal. NCIPL is a member of NC Save\$ Energy Alliance because we believe this is the most equitable and sure way to protect the health, safety and comfort of our most needy neighbors. Energy costs for heating and cooling are disproportionately great for the poor, the elderly on fixed income and even those of moderate income. These folks are also the most vulnerable to the health consequences of excesses of heat and cold. Many NC households need financial assistance for their energy bills, and the energy efficiency upgrades that would significantly decrease their energy costs and enable them to live in comfort and safety are too often financially unavailable. A public benefits fund with low interest revolving loans as outlined in NC Save\$ Energy is the lowest cost way of funding these upgrades, especially as the weatherization programs funded by the recovery act are about to run out. Public benefits funds have worked well in other states to both save energy and create jobs and we believe this model should be adopted in NC. There are over 3 million existing homes in NC that can use energy efficiency upgrades, which if accomplished would improve the financial and physical welfare of families living in these homes and contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by decreasing the burning of coal, the major source of electricity in our state. A process, independent of the Utilities whose business model is to encourage energy use and sales, is the best way to make these upgrades available to people of low, fixed and middle income.

All great religious traditions instruct us to care for the poor, the sick and the needy as well as the world and ecosystems that sustain us. Energy efficiency improvements to existing housing stock through NC Save\$ Energy is a simple, practical and effective way to accomplish part of that universal charge. I hope the members of the Energy Policy Council will choose to support this important model as you are creating your recommendations for our State.

