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Water-Energy Savings and Regional One-Stop Shops for TA, Outreach

Dear Commissioners,

It is with great interest that I read in the 2018 Integrated Energy Policy Report Update of the demonstration projects on Water-Energy Savings and creating Regional One-Stop Shops to increase access to clean energy.

In the low income multifamily housing sector, our staff and financial resources are often constrained. Most of our properties have significantly higher operating expenses for water and sewer than for electricity and natural gas.

Onsite water reuse is a frontier which lends itself well to new construction, and generally poorly to retrofitting our existing building stock. I applaud and encourage further demonstration projects that focus on onsite water reuse as well as reducing water consumption, especially in existing multifamily buildings. When sewer charges are linked to water consumption, owners can be much more motivated to invest in efficiency and reuse measures. This is the exception rather than the rule in our properties, where retrofits save on water consumption, but not one dime on wastewater removal.

For many years I've known and cited the statistic of nearly 20% of electric consumption in California is for transporting, treating, heating and disposing of water. Those incentive programs that include only hot water savings as eligible measures miss the mark of reducing the energy embedded in water. I encourage the CEC to extend eligibility to cold water conservation measures too.

Finally, the creation of regional one-stop shops to provide outreach and technical assistance to interested consumers truly is key to increasing access to clean energy. Low income multifamily housing providers need this support to help California make a dent in energy and water consumption in our existing rental properties. As most low income residents are renters, staffing a small number of regional one-stop shops will enable us to stretch our staff and financial resources into the realm of energy savings and broaden clean energy access to many underserved Californians. These hubs that will help owners navigate all available incentive programs and funding opportunities are desperately needed. I look forward to knowing your timeline for implementing this crucial tool in our state.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Dorst, Portfolio Manager, Resources for Community Development (Berkeley, CA)