CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

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April 28, 2026

Chair John Marty
Members, Minnesota Senate Finance Committee

Re: Support for SF 4504 – Funding for Energy Assistance

Dear Chair Marty and Members of the Committee:

I write this letter in strong support of the $15 million in funding for the Energy Assistance Program included in the Senate Energy Omnibus bill (SF 4504). The Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota (CUB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit advocate for the state's utility consumers. CUB frequently participates in proceedings of the Public Utilities Commission, where we seek to represent ratepayers' interests. Our staff has also advised more than 25,000 Minnesotans on how to avoid shutoffs, reduce utility expenses, and answer other home energy questions.

Over the past four years, CUB has convened three dozen energy providers, service organizations, and community groups to support legislation to expand Energy Assistance. To be clear, CUB will not receive any funding from this bill. We do not administer Energy Assistance or have any formal role in the program. However, we do get calls from many Minnesotans who are unable to keep up with their home energy costs. Our team has difficult conversations with people who are dealing with medical issues, the loss of a job, the need to care for family members, and other challenges, and we try to help people put together a plan to keep their homes warm and their power on through these kinds of difficult circumstances—including helping them get connected with assistance when it is available.

CUB's team may speak with more than a thousand people this year about past-due bills and utility disconnections. But unfortunately, hundreds of thousands of Minnesota families are in these situations. Minnesotans are behind on utility bills by more than $145 million. The need is great.

The $15 million commitment in this bill shows that energy affordability is a top priority for Chair Frentz and the Energy Committee. The proposal takes advantage of the program infrastructure established by the long-standing, federally funded Energy Assistance Program, including an experienced provider network and careful income verification and oversight. Energy Assistance is proven program, and legislators can be confident that state funds will directly support families in need.

CUB strongly supports the Energy Assistance funding in SF 4504 and respectfully encourages you to provide as much funding as possible.

Sincerely,

Annie Levenson-Falk, Executive Director

cc: Senate Energy Chair Nick Frentz