



## Affordable Energy Coalition Applauds New Energy Efficiency Program

*“It is effective and will deliver multiple benefits”*

Adsum for Women and Children

Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia

Bayers Westwood Family Resource Centre

Canadian Mental Health Association – Nova Scotia

Community Action on Homelessness

Community Advocates Network

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Diaconate of All Nations Church

Ecology Action Centre

Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy

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Halifax – The Affordable Energy Coalition, an organization dedicated to ensuring the universal access to energy services, is congratulating Conserve Nova Scotia for taking an important first step in helping low-income Nova Scotians handle their energy costs.

“I think this shows that an agency, dedicated to providing energy efficiency, has been able to realize that multiple benefits exist in the delivery of an effective low-income program. This is going to help those most in need and reduce pollution at the same time,” said Brendan Haley, Energy Coordinator, for the Ecology Action Centre.

The Coalition was critical of a previously announced program that required a low-income individual to pay for an audit and improvements up-front. The coalition said that would make the program inaccessible to low-income individuals who cannot afford the money.

The Coalition says the program approach announced today strikes down the first-cost barrier by providing an audit and improvements at no cost to the participant.

“The investments the government will make in these houses are going to reduce poverty year after year. It is a good investment, a smart poverty reduction approach, and an approach that helps the environment at the same time,” said Brendan Haley.

The Coalition says the poorest 20% of Nova Scotians spend over 14% of their income on energy. Spending about 10% or 8% of income on energy is an acceptable level of what the Coalition calls *energy burden*. A retrofit delivering about 30-40% energy savings can bring some low-income Nova Scotians towards an acceptable energy burden.

Conserve Nova Scotia will initially pilot the low-income programs with 105 homes. This is a good first step, but many more homeowners are in need. The Coalition would thus like to see a province-wide low-income program funded in the next budget.

“Conserve Nova Scotia should be congratulated for putting together an effective program within their existing budget to get something done right now. The hope is that a province-wide low-income program can be delivered after the next budget,” said Brendan Haley.

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