

United States Department of Energy
State Energy Advisory Board (STEAB)
Resolution 09-04

Subject: Establishment of a strategic, coordinated regional staffing presence to facilitate two-way communication and to provide technical assistance to State and local governments.

Background: In 2006, DOE consolidated its six regional offices into the two Program Management Centers (PMCs) in Pittsburgh, PA, and Golden, CO. States currently rely on the PMCs for guidance and technical assistance related to the State Energy Program (SEP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). Additionally, the PMCs will be responsible for providing guidance and technical assistance to States and approximately 1,700 local governments for the new Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants (EECBG).

Issue: States and local governments must have clear and effective communication pathways to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) information to enable the successful delivery of Recovery Act programs, specifically SEP, WAP, and EECBG. Many States also have an increased need for technical assistance and guidance associated with the non-recovery funding levels of SEP and WAP. Furthermore, DOE must find a way to adequately support State and local governments with issues that arise in the administration of the block grants. It is unlikely that DOE will be able to meet these needs from the isolation of the PMCs. There is a direct need for EERE to re-establish a strategic and coordinated regional staffing presence to meet the needs of State and local governments. The existing fundamental disconnect between the States, DOE, and the PMCs requires communication not only on the procedures and procurement rules, but also on the substance of program delivery.

Recommendation: The State Energy Advisory Board (STEAB) recommends that EERE take the necessary steps to re-establish a multi-State/regional area staffing presence, managed by the PMCs, to focus on outreach issues and to provide direct support to State and local stakeholders in the delivery of SEP, WAP and EECBG. Regional staff will need to maintain an active and physical presence in their assigned States on a regular basis to achieve effective implementation of the Recovery Act. These PMC regional staff/circuit riders should be established to ensure that information provided to State and local stakeholders is accurate and timely. This effort should be closely coordinated with the regional efforts that are being initiated by the State and local organizations that directly represent these governments and other direct providers (e.g., NASEO, NASCSP, ICLEI, NACO, U.S. Conference of Mayors, NCAF, League of Cities, Native American Tribal Representatives, etc). Additionally, these staff should help State and local stakeholders align their energy-related programs with those provided by other federal agencies (e.g., HUD, HHS, USDA, DOL, FDA, and EPA).

Unanimously Adopted by the STEAB on March 19, 2009