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November 27, 2012

The Honorable Kenneth B. Horn, Chair
Michigan House of Representatives
Energy and Technology Committee
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Re: AARP Support for Senate Bill 1135

Dear Chairman Horn and Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our support for **Senate Bill 1135**, which was introduced by Senator Bruce Caswell and would create the "Michigan Energy Assistance Act."

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501c4 social welfare organization with a membership that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. More than 1.4 million Michigan citizens are AARP members.

For approximately 10 years, Michigan's Low Income and Energy Efficiency Fund (LIEEF) provided a necessary safety net for Michigan's low income seniors and other vulnerable residents who faced increasing and often fluctuating heating and other household costs while their incomes remain fixed. In some areas, LIEEF served as much as 30 percent of the senior population. After the Michigan Court of Appeals' July 21, 2011 order called into question the authority of the Michigan Public Service Commission to administer LIEEF funds, the Legislature established the Vulnerable Household Warmth Fund to meet this need for the 2011-2012 heating season only. The Vulnerable Household Warmth Fund will not exist beyond the current fiscal year, but the need in our state for energy assistance for low income seniors and other vulnerable households absolutely remains.

We urge the Legislature to pass Senate Bill 1135 to help vulnerable Michigan residents avoid life-threatening utility shut offs, and encourage the Legislature to continue its commitment to a long-term solution to the continuing need for energy assistance in our state.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. Please feel free to contact Felicia Wasson, our Associate State Director for Government Affairs at (517) 267-8917 or fwasson@aarp.org with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Morrison

Jacqueline Morrison
State Director

Robert G. Romasco, President
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