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NEWS RELEASE

Sierra Club John Muir Chapter
222 South Hamilton St, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 256-0565 <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org>

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Contact: Shahla M. Werner, Chapter Director
Elizabeth Ward, Conservation Programs Coordinator
(608) 256-0565

Don't Leave Wisconsin Jobseekers Out in the Cold! Sierra Club Urges Legislators to Restore Energy Efficiency Funding

Madison, WI –Time is running out during the current legislative session to restore funding for Focus on Energy, Wisconsin's statewide energy efficiency and renewable energy incentive program. Wisconsin is craving jobs, energy bills are about to increase with colder temperatures, and [the legislative audit just came out confirming that Focus on Energy is good for Wisconsin](#). In 2010, the Joint Finance Committee approved increases to the program, starting at \$210 million in 2011 and increasing to \$256 million by 2014. In May of 2011, Governor Walker's Biennial Budget wiped out those increases and capped program investments to 1.2% of utility revenues. The Sierra Club is calling on legislators to fix these cuts this session.

Previous investments in Focus on Energy allowed over 3,000 businesses to create 24,679 job-years during the first ten years of the program (a job-year is one person working full time for one year).¹ An independent study conducted by the Energy Center of Wisconsin in 2009 showed increasing program funding would create between 7,000 and 9,000 additional jobs each year². In December 2011, the Legislative Audit Bureau released a report showing the Focus on Energy program returns \$2.30 for every dollar invested based on energy savings and avoided costs of air pollution emissions alone, not including indirect job creation benefits.

"Don't leave Wisconsinites out in the cold. Funding cuts to Focus on Energy need to be restored immediately," said Shahla Werner, Director of the Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter. "Focus on Energy is a cost-effective program that saves energy and spurs job creation for private sector businesses that manufacture, sell and install products such as insulation, heating and cooling equipment, and energy efficient lighting."

"Wisconsin is one of the only states currently experiencing stagnant economic growth.³ This is a problem that investing in Focus on Energy can help solve. The legislature needs to put jobs, ratepayers, and common sense before politics, and get this done this session," said Elizabeth Ward, Conservation Programs Coordinator, Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter.

The last general business floor period day is March 15. If the legislature fails to act, ratepayers and jobseekers will not be able to reap the benefits of any increased investments in this program until 2013. Many Wisconsinites cannot afford to wait that long.

Founded in 1892 by John Muir, the Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. The Sierra Club's mission is to explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out those objectives. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is made up of 15,000 members and supporters working to promote clean energy and protect water resources in Wisconsin.

¹ [Focus on Energy Evaluation, Semiannual Report \(Second Half of 2009\)](#), PA Consulting Group, April 23, 2010

² [Energy Efficiency and Customer-sited Renewable Resource Potential in Wisconsin](#), Energy Center of Wisconsin, 2009

³ [State Coincident Indexes, August – October 2011](#), Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, December 2011