
April 18, 2018

Privy Council Office
Attn: Impact and Innovation Unit
Room 1000
85 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A3

Re: Support for Town of Bridgewater Smart Cities Challenge Grant Application

To the Smart Cities Challenge jury panel,

This is a letter confirming the full support and confidence of the Ecology Action Centre in the Town of Bridgewater to address energy poverty by pursuing the Smart Cities Challenge grant.

The Ecology Action Centre is the largest and most active environmental organization in Atlantic Canada. Since 1971, the EAC has been working at the local, regional, national, and more recently at the international level to build a healthier and more sustainable world. We envision a society in Nova Scotia that respects and protects nature, and provides environmentally and economically sustainable solutions for its citizens.

EAC is quite familiar with the concept of energy poverty, in that it relates to our advocacy about energy policy. We do our best to support and advocate for policies that reduce energy poverty. In partnership with the Women's Place Resource Centre and Efficiency Nova Scotia, the EAC has delivered energy conservation and energy efficiency workshops to individuals who live with energy poverty and organizations that work in social housing. In general, we believe that the conversation about energy poverty revolves too much around energy prices, with not enough attention paid to energy efficiency and energy conservation. The Town of Bridgewater has demonstrated to us that their initiative will address the important connection between energy efficiency and reducing energy poverty.

The Town of Bridgewater has broken the ground and paved the way for small municipalities and communities that want to take action against climate change. This innovative municipality has been an inspiration to climate-concerned citizens in Nova Scotia by showing just how much impact a municipal government can have on the greenhouse gas emissions and energy associated with a municipality. The Energize Bridgewater campaign has been particularly effective for demonstrating the Town's commitment to acting on energy issues that concern their citizens. This commitment to long-term positive change directed by the constituents' needs is one of the many reasons that Bridgewater should continue to be supported in their work. Furthermore, the solutions that Bridgewater implements are thoughtfully backed up by thorough planning and research, contributing to their successes. We believe that their successes will continue to increase and benefit their community as well as all of Nova Scotia and Canada.

If the Town of Bridgewater makes significant energy poverty interventions, individuals and families in Bridgewater will be able to reduce their spending on wasted energy, leading to reduced stress on the families and individuals and therefore increased wellbeing and health. As the intervention is about improving the efficiency of homes, homes will improve structurally and become more live-able. Savings will be accumulated that can be used for food, or other living necessities, or anything else that will add richness to the lives of individuals or families who are experiencing energy poverty. Intervening in energy poverty is an immense opportunity to reduce social injustice and greenhouse gas emissions while improving economic growth and employment in Bridgewater. This will have ripple effects for the whole of Nova Scotia, and set an example that other municipalities can copy.

The EAC is pleased to support Bridgewater's initiative to address energy poverty. We are happy to connect Bridgewater with other organizations/stakeholders we work with, and, if it is helpful, to participate in community capacity building and training activities. The Ecology Action Centre is confident that winning the Smart Cities Challenge grant would be a major contribution toward reducing energy poverty in Bridgewater.

Sincerely,



Emma Norton
Energy Conservation Coordinator
Ecology Action Centre