



March 4, 2025

Chair Jason Smith
House Committee on Ways and Means
1139 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Richard Neal
House Committee on Ways and Means
1129 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Smith and Ranking Member Neal,

As the President and CEO of the United Church of Christ Cornerstone Fund, a non-profit financial institution that offers loans to churches and other faith-based non-profit organizations, I write to you today to respectfully urge you protect and preserve the Direct Pay clean energy tax credit program, which makes clean energy tax credits available to nonprofit entities. As you draft the budget reconciliation bill, please consider the value this program provides to churches and religious communities around the country and protect it from harmful cuts.

Since the establishment of the Direct Pay program, the UCC Cornerstone Fund has built a loan pipeline of \$19 million to nearly 50 churches and other faith-based non-profit organizations with the confidence that a portion of each solar project Cornerstone supports will be paid for by the Direct Pay program. This has allowed for substantial cost savings among our congregations, including many that have been able to substantially eliminate their electric bills, typically a church's largest utility expense. UCC Cornerstone Fund has already closed a substantial number of these loans, all based on the understanding that the Direct Pay program would reimburse 30% of the total cost of the project after it was fully built and implemented.

We have become increasingly concerned that churches will be put in a challenging financial position if the current Congress decides to cut funding to the Direct Pay program to pay for other priorities in the upcoming budget reconciliation bill. If churches end up on the hook for an extra 30% of a clean energy project, this could endanger their very existence and at the very least will force them to divert precious funds away from important ministry. In addition, church lenders will be left with loans that are unsound due to the sudden disappearance of legislated funds.

We are confident that this Congress is supportive of religious communities and would under no circumstances put these communities at risk. That is why it is with great hope that we alert you to this issue, in the hope that you will use all congressional resources at your disposal to protect the Direct Pay clean energy tax credit program, which so many of our churches rely on.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria C. Coyne".

Maria C. Coyne
President & CEO of Cornerstone Fund