

**Berenice Lopez-Dorsey**  
**Testimony before the**  
**Subcommittee on Green Jobs and the New Economy**  
**of the United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works**  
**Field Hearing Entitled**  
**“An Efficient Way to Grow Jobs: Energy Upgrades that Save Families and Businesses Money, Reduce**  
**Pollution, and Create Good Jobs.”**  
**Portland, Oregon**

**September 4, 2013**

Our company, Home Energy Life performance Group, Incorporated also known as H.E.L.P. Group, was born from a desire to build an organization that encompassed green job values, assistance to homeowners, and skilled jobs with a long-term future. Home performance incorporates all three, and includes building science education and certification for employees.

I am an **immigrant**. I was born and raised in Oaxaca, Mexico. The youngest of 9, my father supported us by fishing while my mom took care of us. Growing up with very little in a large family, I learned self-reliance. My parents taught us the importance of hard work, commitment and the value of integrity & respect.

All of which become the core to the foundation of my businesses now.

My story developed in Mexico 21 years ago, when I met my husband, a “nice gringo”, fell madly in love and moved to the US and married him. 9 years later, I proudly became a US Citizen. For me, our country truly is the land of opportunities, where I was able to work, to learn new social and economics roots and finally to start a successful business out of necessity having to support my family after my husband becoming disabled in 2001. I want to stress how important political understanding and support is to this process. The concept that anyone can conceive a start-up, grow a profitable business, and provide long-term employment is symbolic of the American Dream. I am not saying it is easy; a lot of sacrifices have to be made along the way. For example: having to work 7 days a week, long hours, missing my daughters soccer games to secure the next sale, draining my personal bank account to make payroll because clients don’t pay on time. But if you ask me, “is it worth it?” and “would you do it all over again?” my reply would be ABSOLUTELY!

**The simple fact that job creation is so possible in our nation**, especially in Oregon, where energy conservation has always been in favor, meaning you can **dream in green**. I and my entire team take pride in helping Oregon families to enjoy healthy, more comfortable homes and lower utility bills.

By the end of this year, H.E.L.P. Group, Inc. will have created **20 full-time positions and mentored 4** other Home Performance contractors, generated over **7 million dollars in energy retrofit sales**, and **reduced the energy consumption for more than 800 Oregon homes** by an average of 34%. That's 800+ Oregon families who now live more comfortable homes with quality indoor air, healthier and safer houses and who have more cash in their pockets as a result of lower energy bills. We **also consistently provide work for more than a dozen sub-contractors who at some point were employees of either H.E.L.P. Group, Inc or Move In Ready, LLC**. Creating that ripple effect, these sub-contractors are now generating additional reciprocal business. **In addition, we rely on more than 20 local small businesses** for truck maintenance, equipment, signage, marketing materials, advertising – the list goes on and on. H.E.L.P. Group, Inc. spends hundreds of thousands of dollars **per year** on fundamental products like windows, insulation, appliances and machinery.

Now, I'd like to tell you about the journeys of a couple of our team members. These are people I want you to know about because **their transformations is a direct result of our ability to create jobs** in a green and growing industry, where a trade can be learned and a promotion can be earned.

I met Rodrigo Jr through his father Rodrigo Sr. who has been employed by me for 11 years through Move In ready, LLC a sister company to H.E.L.P. Group Inc. He had been released from prison early 2011; in fact he had actually reached adulthood while incarcerated. He had no skills and little ambition. I saw a strong and bright young man and I believed that he had the potential to learn and master a trade. He needed an opportunity to contribute to a growing business who needed him right back. Today, Rodrigo has earned his OSHA-30 certificate, his Lead-Safe Renovation certificate, and is a qualified Weatherization Installer. Today, he is a young father supporting his family and is playing a happy role in our community.

Yulma is another, now a success story. Unfortunately, she was abused in her marriage. As a single mother of two, with no personal resources, it was unthinkable to consider leaving her marriage, even to escape abuse. Until a job opening with Move In Ready, LLC. a growing company in 2002 gave her the encouragement and opportunity she needed. Today Yulma manages her own work schedule, directs others, and supports her 13 year old daughter and 10 year old son.

I am thrilled that you will get the opportunity to also hear the story of Sary Dobhran, another one of our team members who is testifying here today.

Like Rodrigo, Yulma and Sary's stories, our company philosophy is to create the opportunity, invest in training and fully support employee growth **without** micromanaging. We have found, that within that environment, employees thrive and businesses profit.

We still need your help! We have come a long way but our industry continues to need political understanding of our mission and goals, support for programs, and legislation that advances home energy efficiency.

**Oregon's Home Performance Industry** is a leader in green job development, career-sustainable jobs with advancement potential, resulting in a skilled labor force with family-supporting wages. Where once the industry consisted of single-skilled low-earning workers, **together we have created a labor force of multi-skilled professionals** who've elevated the value of energy efficiency in Oregon.

And I am proud to be part of it.

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