

ENERGY PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD STAKEHOLDER FORUM  
JUNE 23, 2006 - LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, CONCORD

**COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE**

***NEW HAMPSHIRE RESIDENTIAL ENERGY PERFORMANCE  
ASSOCIATION (REPA)***

**Comments:**

As an organization whose membership is comprised of New Hampshire residential energy professionals who are highly trained and experienced in providing professional energy audits and home energy improvements (many through utility funded programs) we would like to comment on ways to further improve Energy Efficiency for New Hampshire residents.

By addressing home energy performance from a “house-as-a-system” approach where trained energy professionals review the home comprehensively rather than through the eyes of companies that sell very specific products (e.g. windows, heating systems) everyone; homeowners, businesses, utilities, independent system operators alike are reaping the benefits of these efforts.

REPA fully supports the electric and gas utilities in their continued delivery of energy efficiency programs and services throughout New Hampshire.

There are, however, steps that could be taken at a statewide level that would improve the availability of energy efficiency services for residential customers. Currently, residential customers may receive services through energy efficiency programs provided that their homes are heated with natural gas or electricity, are constructing a new home or are income qualified. Most (74%) of New Hampshire’s residents live in existing housing stock (averaging over 35 years old) heated with other forms of heat fuel such as oil, propane or wood where no such program exists, and there is a genuine need.

**Issues that all NH Families have:**

**A:** They are COLD; saving energy should not have to mean lowering the thermostat below their comfort.

**B:** Winch when they see the fuel delivery truck Knowing that a large bill is to follow

**C:** Potentially have other energy waste related problems such as poor indoor air quality that exasperates asthma and illness for children.

Ice dams resulting in large insurance costs and repair costs, potential High levels of Carbon monoxide.

N.H has a wide spectrum of styles of homes, each being unique in that a different builder or other had different techniques and styles of framing and finishing a home under time constraints.

Most people are concerned of the future of heating costs and the media forecasting shortages and potential run outs down the road.

In addition every home that uses more than it could, indirectly has involvement with military actions over oil.

There are many avenues that promise high-energy claims with big-ticket items but none of which follow through with either tracking the actual or giving any substantial Promises.

**As shown by Exhibit: A** (Nationally certified Treat modeling of a few common home types) shows that some items that the public through media believes is the answer to huge energy savings, just is not.

Having entities that are trained and potentially 3rd party certified to understand how a house operates and how to properly diagnose each homes unique needs assures a homeowner and the state that real solutions are given and real attention to our states Energy usage and needs.

A substantial and accurate reduction in energy usage can finally be obtained with sensible dollars and at the same time dramatically reducing emissions for far fewer dollars than PV and other suggested means.

As demonstrated by exhibit A: 40-50% real time savings can be obtained for the least amount of investment than some of the myths.

Not only does a Home energy specialist look at energy waste solutions but is required to not simply overlook un healthy indoor air quality issues but suggest and perhaps implement proven solutions using building science techniques.

#### **Recommendations for the above:**

1. REPA strongly recommends that legislation continue to **support** New Hampshire families by helping reduce their energy burden through the **utility sponsored energy efficiency programs.**
2. REPA further recommends legislature **NOT shift funds away from programs** that **proactively** address the increasing energy burden. While we agree that there needs to be safety nets to help the income qualified and elderly households to keep warm in the winter and to keep their lights on, this should not come at the expense of the very programs designed to help prevent households from reaching the crisis stage.
3. REPA recommends that efforts be made to provide **more fuel-neutral home energy performance services** where homeowners can receive

an energy audit and upgrades regardless of fuel type. The homeowner would be left with concise written recommendations; a work-order that they can then approach pre-approved contractors for home energy improvement work. Or if the homeowner chooses, this can be arranged through the audit provider.

4. REPA suggests that **low-interest financing** be made available for home energy **improvements that are recommended following an energy audit by a certified energy auditor** that employs the “house-as-a-system” approach. Thereby avoiding the possibility of financing expensive energy improvement measures that may not ever pay for themselves over a reasonable time frame and result in non-impressive energy savings.

Let us face it that a Human Body is extremely complex and needs an educated Person with credentials to properly diagnose and solve a health issue and failure to do so effects the whole body.

A home is also a complex system of integrated parts that needs an educated Person with credentials to solve and diagnose the energy and health issues it has.

Both industries have many supposed solutions to problems that are mass media driven but have no backbone to substantiate the claims.

Which do you use when you have fallen ill or suffered a major injury? You have 2 alternatives the Doctor or Media driven claims products and services.

For the Home that is using 40-50% more energy than what is actually necessary while suffering other issues as a result of older building technology the Homeowner who really does want to do the "RIGHT" thing does not currently have both options readily available in NH.

Many other states have implemented Energy saving programs, and some are highly successful Market transformation Leader States. These have creatively used funding to spur on the option of a certified "Home performance contractor", to be a common knowledge trade type.

With creative use of Energy dollars these States have taken out the most common roadblock to their success for savings and emission reductions with very little implementation effort and capital.

This Market transformation approach has helped Thousands of families, regardless of fuel type, each year get a Whole home evaluation and implement recommended cost effective investments using bought down interest rates from 5-7% to get real time solutions to their Energy Bill woes.

New York State has proven so successful implementing this approach that other states such as California and Maine are following suit.

Some may say " We do not have the people to do the improvements and Home evaluations with the latest technology in Energy usage tools."

The other states started this way and it literally has opened the floodgates of respected professionals getting trained and receiving 3rd party certification to offer these real time solutions.

Bottom line more Homeowners in these States are aware of energy savings and the potential for it in their home and are actually able to implement rapid payback improvements utilizing low interest financing. Thus creating a very small monthly payment especially after “real” solutions were given for their unique home and increased comfort.

The same can be accomplished here in NH and I urge you to at least examine the Pros and any potential Cons of these states Energy programs to have a viable alternative to expensive Media driven solutions.