



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Catharine Young

Improving Home Energy Efficiency

CATHARINE YOUNG November 13, 2013

| ISSUE: **ENERGY, HOUSING**

| COMMITTEE: **LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON RURAL RESOURCES**

Senator Young encourages families to take actions to enhance comfort and reduce energy costs

ALBANY— Snowy weather and brisk winds have already begun their annual journey across New York State's landscape. It's the beginning of a season where homes require greater energy consumption, and that means higher costs paid by families to heat their homes.

"The added burden of heating a home during a frigid winter can pose financial difficulties for many New York residents, especially in rural parts of the state," said Senator Catharine Young (R, I, C—Olean), chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. "Many rural homes were not built with a focus on energy efficiency, yet there are steps that can be taken to reduce energy usage and improve living conditions even during the coldest of New York winters."

Comprehensive home energy audits can be scheduled through a program administered by the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA), with the assessments available to many New York residents for free or reduced costs. Contractors associated with the program conduct the assessments and provide a detailed list of energy efficiency recommendations to homeowners. A ten percent cashback incentive is available for certain improvements. Many homeowners may qualify for grants or loans to accomplish the improvements, depending on household income.

Additionally, the Weatherization Assistance Program helps income-eligible individuals and families with identifying and making energy efficiency improvements in their homes. The program is administered by the New York State Homes and Community Renewal agency, and more information can be found at the following website:

www.nyshcr.org/Programs/WeatherizationAssistance/

The first step in determining the actions that homeowners can take to improve home energy efficiency is an energy audit conducted by an experienced contractor. A comprehensive audit involves inspecting the property to identify areas where energy efficiency can be improved and can include assessments of heating/cooling systems, insulation quality, appliance efficiency, lighting and more.

The results of an audit can be used to generate solutions to improve energy efficiency of a home. While it might be difficult now to accomplish large home projects before colder weather arrives, there are many actions that homeowners can take to make their homes more comfortable during the winter months. Adding insulation, sealing gaps, caulking, adding weatherstripping and installing a programmable thermostat can all make a significant difference.

Even more useful energy efficiency information is available on NYSERDA's website and through the federal government's Energy Star website as follows:

www.nyserda.ny.gov

www.energystar.gov

"Energy efficiency tools and technology have come a long way, and I encourage residents to take advantage of improvements that can reduce energy usage in their homes during the upcoming winter and for years to come," said Senator Young.