

Dear Friend,

Conserving energy should always be a high priority, so we do not deplete our earth's natural resources. The days of inexpensive energy are a thing of the past because of the globally high demand for oil, coal and natural gas. It is imperative to learn energy conservation techniques that we can use in our home and daily routines.

The prices of home heating fuels are not controlled by state government. They fluctuate up or down based on the international markets.

My colleagues and I in the New York State Senate are committed to keep finding ways to provide financial relief. Staying warm in the winter and keeping cool in the summer shouldn't mean breaking the family budget.

In this pamphlet you will find an overview of the many programs that help New Yorkers conserve energy and reduce cost. I hope you find this information useful. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,


Roxanne J. Persaud
19th Senate District

Examples of weatherization services include: weather-stripping, repair or replacement of heating systems, replacement or repair of windows and/or doors, addition of insulation, replacing problem furnaces, and minor repairs.

Program eligibility is based on household income, and both renters and homeowners may apply. For more information, including qualifications and applications, contact your local weatherization provider or visit: www.nysdhcr.gov/programs/weatherizationassistance for assistance in identifying weatherization providers in your community. The NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal can also be reached toll-free at 1-866-ASK-DHCR. (1-866-275-3427).

Home Energy Fair Practices Act (HEFPA)

HEFPA provides residential energy customers with comprehensive protections in such areas as application for service, customer billing and payment and complaint procedures. Customers who are having problems paying their utility bill should be aware of their rights and responsibilities under the HEFPA rules.

SPECIAL PROTECTIONS

Special protections under HEFPA are available for consumers with medical emergencies; or who are elderly, blind or disabled; and to all consumers during the cold weather period between November 1 and April 15.

- If your utility is aware that you and all adults living with you are 62 years of age or older, blind or disabled, it will make special attempts to contact you by phone or, if necessary, in person, a least three days before a scheduled service shut off, in order to help keep your utility service on.
- During the cold weather period of November 1 to April 15, your utility has to make special efforts to determine if disconnection of your heat-related service will cause a problem to your health and safety.

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Deferred Payment Agreements If you have a financial problem that prevented you from paying previous bills, you can make a deferred payment agreement, which will allow you to pay the overdue amount in reasonable installments.

Third Party Notification As a residential customer, you can select a "third party," such as a relative or friend, to receive all notices related to termination of services. The third party can contact your utility company on your behalf and help you work out payment terms.

Payment Dates Consumers on fixed incomes have the right to have their due dates adjusted so they can pay their bills on time. For example, if a monthly check comes on the 3rd of the month and the utility bill is due on the 5th, a consumer can ask the utility to move the due date to later in the month.

Budget or Balance Billing These payment plans help to spread payments out more evenly across the year.

Call your utility company for information on how to enroll in these plans.

Disconnections If your service has been, or is about to be, terminated for non-payment, you can call the NYS Public Service Commission's Office of Consumer Services at their special toll-free Emergency HOTLINE, 1-800-342-3355.

Contact Me

DISTRICT OFFICE

1222 East 96th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11236
(718) 649-7653

ALBANY OFFICE

504 Legislative Office Bldg.
Albany, NY 12247
(518) 455-2788

ONLINE

persaud.nysenate.gov
persaud@nysenate.gov

SAVING ENERGY SAVING MONEY

PROGRAMS & RESOURCES TO LOWER YOUR ENERGY BILLS



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

ROXANNE J. PERSAUD

19th Senate District
persaud.nysenate.gov
persaud@nysenate.gov



New York Energy \$mart Communities

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) offers local, convenient, community-based assistance to all New Yorkers through its Energy \$mart Communities (E\$C) Program. E\$C works with 22 Community Coordinators in 10 regions across New York State to help NYSERDA reach out to residential, commercial, institutional, municipal and industrial customers.

Community Coordinators can help you and your community by:

- Matching energy project needs with NYSERDA funding opportunities and other economic development resources
- Creating partnerships to encourage the development and implementation of local energy projects
- Educating homeowners, community leaders, business owners and the general public on the benefits of energy efficiency and renewable resources
- Increasing awareness of local and NYSERDA business assistance services available to early-stage, clean-energy businesses
- Providing energy education forums to help achieve energy savings for new development efforts
- Offering job training and recruitment opportunities for local business partners
- Building a network of local organizations and agencies

For more information, contact your Community Coordinator at: www.nyserderda.ny.gov/Community-Outreach/Energy-Smart-Communities

ENERGY-EFFICIENT and ENERGY STAR®

Products

ENERGY-EFFICIENT products deliver the same (or more) services for less energy while helping to protect the environment. Using less energy decreases the amount of energy needed from power plants, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving the quality of our air. Energy efficiency helps the economy too, by saving consumers and businesses millions of dollars in energy costs. Energy-efficient solutions can

reduce the energy bill for many homeowners and businesses by 20 to 30%.

A product or appliance qualifies for the ENERGY STAR label when it meets or exceeds federal energy-efficiency and quality guidelines without sacrificing performance. Within the federal Energy Management Program, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) determines these guidelines.

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program

A drafty home, rooms too hot or too cold, or high energy bills are all too common issues for homeowners. And while the installation of new heating system, or buying replacement windows, may fix part of the problem, the way to better results is through an integrated “whole-house” approach that looks at your house as a system.

Under the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program, a certified contractor (accredited by the Building Performance Institute, or BPI) will perform a home energy audit and provide recommendations for energy improvements. There is a fee for the audit. However, if you choose to have the work done, the fee is deducted from the cost of the work.

After the audit, the BPI-certified Home Performance contractor will provide a cost estimate for each suggested improvement, along with a report outlining the energy savings per improvement, making it easier to choose which improvements to make.

In addition to receiving comprehensive energy efficiency services, using a participating BPI accredited contractor also gives you access to certain financing options. Qualified homeowners may choose from the following:

Incentives and Financing The Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® program offers valuable financial incentives and low-interest financing that help make energy efficiency improvements more affordable. Persons who complete energy efficiency upgrades through the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program will be eligible to receive 10% of the cost of eligible upgrades back (up to a maximum of \$3,000) after the work is complete. Participating contractors

can help verify that upgrades qualify for this incentive.

NYSERDA also offers two low-interest loans options:

Option 1: On-Bill Recovery Loans

On-Bill Recovery Loans allow individuals to have loan payments built into utility bills, rather than in an extra bill each month. Monthly payments are calculated not to exceed the expected amount that energy upgrades are expected to save.

Option 2: Smart Energy Loans

Smart Energy Loans offer affordable interest rates, flexible terms and simple repayment options. Paying for a Smart Energy Loan is similar to any other conventional loan. Monthly payments are made to NYSERDA's loan servicer by check or automatic bank withdrawals.

Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR

If you are income-eligible, you may receive assistance to cover up to 50% of the cost of energy efficiency improvements recommended by a BPI-certified Home Performance contractor's home energy audit. Households with an income equal to or lower than 80% of state or area median income, whichever is greater, may be eligible to receive financial incentives through Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR. (That's an income of nearly \$65,000 a year for a family of four in most counties and higher in several downstate counties.)

Under this program, homeowners and renters may be eligible for subsidies of up to \$5,000/household, and 2 to 4 unit building owners up to a maximum of \$10,000/building.

Income-qualified renters can receive up to a 50% subsidy towards the purchase of ENERGY STAR appliances and lighting or other energy-reducing products.

EmPower New YorkSM

The EmPower program has provided more than 61,000 income-eligible New Yorkers with insulation, draft reduction, high efficiency lighting or appliance upgrades – **for free**. Residents have also learned to reduce their

energy bills further by changing the ways they use energy in their homes-keeping more money in their pockets. More information is available at: www.nyserderda.ny.gov.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

HEAP assists lower-income individuals and families with home heating costs in the winter. The Program provides grants up to \$600 and more, depending on: household income; family size; living arrangement; heating expenses; type of heat; and the presence of children under age six, adults over age 60 or disabled individuals. Both renters and homeowners can be eligible for assistance.

HEAP also offers an emergency benefit for households in a heat or heat-related energy emergency. Additionally, the Program offers a furnace repair and/or replacement benefit for households with inoperable heating equipment.

Applications and eligibility information can be obtained at your local Department of Social Services, by calling the HEAP hotline at 1-800-342-3009 or by visiting www.otda.ny.gov/programs/heap.

The Weatherization Assistance Program

The federally funded Weatherization Assistance Program, or WAP, provides money-saving (and in some cases, life-saving) energy efficiency home improvements at no cost to those who qualify. The program serves people with low incomes, particularly elderly adults, disabled individuals, and families with young children.

As part of WAP, a contractor will visit your home to determine what energy saving steps can be taken. On average, weatherization saves consumers more than 20% on their heating bills.



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