

Dear Friend,

Conserving energy is always a high priority, today more so than ever. With global demand for oil, coal and natural gas at an all time high, the days of cheap energy are over. That is why it is imperative to learn ways to conserve energy in our daily lives and especially in our homes.

While prices of home heating fuels go up and down with national and international markets, and are not controlled by the utilities or state government, my colleagues and I in the State Senate are committed to providing relief. Keeping warm in winter, or cool in the summer, shouldn't mean breaking the family budget.

In this report you will find an overview of the many programs that help New Yorkers conserve energy and reduce energy costs. 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,

  
New York State Senator  
José Peralta

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 Consumer Services Division at their special toll-free Emergency HOTLINE, 1-800-342-3355 between 7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. on business days.

Contact Me

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SAVING ENERGY SAVING MONEY  
INFORMATION ON CONSERVING ENERGY COSTS IN YOUR HOME  
NY STATE SENATOR  
JOSÉ PERALTA  
13th Senate District



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New York Senate



## New York Energy \$mart

The New York Energy \$mart program, a partnership between the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the Public Service Commission (PSC), is a conglomerate of programs designed to help households and businesses reduce their energy costs, promote competition for energy efficiency services, and is a key element in the restructuring of New York’s electric energy industry.

New York Energy \$mart has funded, to date, some 2,700 projects in more than 40 individual programs, helping New Yorkers save energy and money by:

- Replacing aging appliances with ENERGY STAR products;
- Conducting home performance energy audits;
- Making homes safe and more comfortable;
- Building new, more efficient homes; and
- Finding qualified contractors and builders.

## The ENERGY STAR Label

New York Energy \$mart brings you ENERGY STAR, a government-backed program that helps consumers and businesses save money through energy efficient products and practices. The ENERGY STAR label is given to products and appliances that cut appliance electricity use by 20 to 50 percent to reduce monthly utility costs.

ENERGY STAR provides a trustworthy label on over 35 product categories, including major appliances, office equipment, lighting, electronics, and even new homes and commercial buildings.

Energy efficiency – delivering the same (or more) services for less energy – helps both consumers and the environment. With the help of ENERGY STAR, Americans saved enough energy in 2009 alone to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 30 million cars, all the while saving nearly \$17 billion on their utility bills.

## 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 a new heating, 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:

**ENERGY STAR Financing** offers homeowners low-interest, unsecured loans from \$2,500 to \$20,000, depending on qualifications.

**Energy \$mart Loan Fund** provides a network of NY lenders that offer loans for energy-efficient home upgrades. New York Energy \$mart reduces the rates on these loans by up to 4.0% over a 10-year loan.

For more information on this program, as well as loan qualifications, call NYSERDA toll-free at 1-866-697-3732.

## 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 \$60,000 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.

## The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

The HEAP program assists lower-income individuals and families with home heating costs in the winter. The program provides grants for heating bills ranging from \$40 to \$600 depending on a household’s income, family size, living arrangement, heating expenses, type heat, and presence of children under the age of six, adults over the age of 60, and 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.state.ny.us/main/heap](http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/heap). Priority is given to those households that have a child or children under the age of eight, adults over 60, or disabled individuals living in the house; spend a large portion of their income on energy bills; have the lowest income; or run out of heating fuel.

## 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.

Examples of weatherization services include: weatherstripping, 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.dhcr.state.ny.us/programs/weatherizationassistance](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us/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)



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