

RESNET Building Performance Policy Initiatives

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Call for Action

Currently America is facing a critical challenge to its energy and environmental future. The nation is facing all of the following daunting challenges:

- + Peaking oil production and growing dependence on imported oil
- + Global climate change
- + Inadequate electrical capacity

Energy Efficiency: America's First Fuel

Energy efficiency is beginning to be seen by President Obama and other policy makers as the “first fuel” needed to meet these challenges.

Why Energy Efficiency ?

- + Energy efficiency is the least cost carbon mitigation option.
- + It represents the only immediate near-term resource option.
- + It is a resource that is available everywhere in large amounts (We have only scratched the surface of achieving its cost effective potential.).
- + It represents the least cost option for the American economy in that it creates large numbers of jobs that can not be outsourced and significantly reduces energy payments to foreign countries.

What is to be Done?

If energy efficiency represents our “first fuel”, how will we take advantage of this opportunity?

RESNET Policy Proposals

Rebate Program for Improving Existing Buildings

Congress should act immediately to implement a performance-based, whole house retrofit program that will save Americans money and stimulate the economy.

The federal government should set a goal of retrofitting all homes by 2030.

RESNET Policy Proposals

Time of Sale Energy Assessments

A large barrier to the ability of consumers to place a premium on energy efficient homes is the lack of information on the prospective home's energy performance.

With a readily understandable, uniform label of a home's energy performance, a consumer can make an informed decision on the home being considered for purchase.

RESNET Policy Proposals

Utility Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standards

Utility renewable portfolio standards have proven effective in the incorporation of renewable energy into the utility grid. Currently over 29 states and the District of Columbia have adopted renewable portfolio standards.

Following this trend a number of states are now adopting energy efficiency portfolio standards. These standards require that regulated utilities must meet a percentage of their demand through improved energy efficiency performance.

Congress should enact a national energy efficiency portfolio requirement

RESNET Policy Proposals

Performance Based Federal Tax Incentives

Congress should immediately extend the new energy efficient homes credit that is working at moving builders to higher performing homes.

The existing homes and the commercial building incentives should be modified and extended. A useful tool in modifying the incentives was embodied in the Snowe-Feinstein Bill that was introduced in the last Congress.

RESNET Policy Proposals

Building Energy Codes to be Based on Total Cost over 30 Year Period

The leaders of the leading industrial nations in the world (G8) have found improving building energy performance as a key component for combating climate change.

The G8 leaders have endorsed the International Energy Agency recommendation that the member nations adopt an economic calculation in determining the stringency of building energy codes that would optimize total energy costs over a thirty year lifetime.

The U.S. should adopt this policy

RESNET Policy Proposals

Adopt Policy that Sets the Goal of Having Net Zero Energy Homes as the Standard of Construction by 2030

A net zero energy home produces as much energy through renewable energy sources as it consumes. The U.S. Department of Energy through its Building America Program believes that it is possible to build net zero energy homes today.

It should be the goal of the federal government to continue the research and development to ensure that net zero energy homes are cost-effective. The government should set the goal that by 2030 net zero energy homes become the standard of construction of homes in the U.S.

RESNET Policy Proposals

Revise Mortgage Financing Underwriting Guidelines to Factor the Energy Performance of a Home into the Mortgage Loan

Congress should require the government sponsored mortgage markets to revise their underwriting guidelines to factor a home's energy efficiency into the loan.

This can be through taking the monthly energy savings documented through a home energy rating to reduce the calculation of housing costs or revising the formula of principal, interest, taxes and insurance by adding the subtraction of the monthly energy savings.

RESNET Policy Proposals

Require Energy Ratings and Cost-Effective Energy Improvements to Foreclosed Homes

The federal government should create a special Home Energy Improvement Initiative that requires property asset management companies to:

- + Set a federal goal to improving the energy performance of the portfolio of all foreclosed properties by 30%.
- + Enable foreclosed homes to receive a screening and energy audit process that would identify suitable homes for cost-effective energy improvements.
- + Install all cost-effective improvements, leveraging federal, state, local, utility and other entities with the capability to pay for improvements, up to a limit of 15% of the assessed value of the property.

Call to Action

Billions of Dollars Slated to Go to States for Building Energy Efficiency in Form of Block Grants.

Action Should be Focused on Advocacy at the State House Level on Ensuring Most Effective Use of Funds Using Existing Infrastructure.

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