

PRESS RELEASE

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Energy Efficient Buildings Would Save Connecticut Families over \$1,700 per Year, While Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Norwalk, Connecticut— Congressman Jim Himes joined Environment Connecticut, Connecticut Green Buildings Council and the Northeast Energy Efficiency Council to release a [new report showing the benefits of investing in energy efficiency](#). The report shows that if the government invests in the energy efficiency of our buildings today, Connecticut families could save over \$1,700 every year on their energy bills by 2030. Saving energy in our buildings would also help Connecticut's fight against global warming by reducing projected greenhouse gas emissions from buildings by 34 percent.

“Let's not waste any more time, any more energy or any more money on outdated buildings,” said Environment Connecticut Field Associate, Nancy Pyne. “We need to invest in efficiency today so we can start building a better tomorrow.”

“America's number-one renewable energy resource is entirely clean, remarkably cost-effective, surprisingly abundant and immediately available: energy efficiency,” said Congressman Himes. “My years in the affordable housing industry proved to me that green building retrofits can create jobs, lower costs for families, and improve our infrastructure all at the same time—if we as a country show the leadership to make it happen.”

America's buildings consume more than 40 percent of our total energy, which amounts to almost 10 percent of all the energy used in the world. Much of this energy is wasted due to inadequate insulation, inefficient heating and cooling systems and poor construction techniques.

The National Academy of Sciences estimates that widespread use of today's technology would increase energy efficiency by up to 30 percent in existing buildings by 2030. With the rapid march of technological innovation and increased investment in efficiency from governments and consumers, even greater gains are possible.

Environment Connecticut's report, [*Building Better: How High-Efficiency Buildings Will Save Money and Reduce Global Warming*](#), analyzes the benefits Connecticut would see if the state committed to dramatically improving the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings. The report uses government data to estimate reduced energy consumption, decreased fossil fuel use, money saved on energy bills, and global warming pollution prevented in 2030 and 2050.

Making our buildings more efficient would reduce the projected energy use of Connecticut's buildings 34 percent by 2030. That would conserve enough energy every year to power nearly 3 million homes.

These enormous energy savings translate directly into financial savings in the form of reduced energy bills. The average Connecticut family of four can expect to save over \$1,700 a year by 2030, which is 32 percent lower than what they would be paying without the improvements in building efficiency.

Reduced energy consumption in Connecticut would also prevent the emission of 7.7 million tons of global warming pollution every year by 2030, which is equivalent to taking nearly 1.4 million cars off the road.

It's been said before, but the bottom line is that the cleanest and cheapest source of energy is the energy we never use," said Mike DeNamur of the [Northeast Energy Efficiency Council](#) and Trane Commercial Systems. "In Connecticut, we can generate a lot of these "nega-watts" by re-commissioning, upgrading, and improving our existing facilities and by making smart choices in the way we build new. It's a win-win-win for business, industry and the environment."

"Making a commitment to energy efficient buildings exemplifies leadership both environmentally and fiscally. Owners who differentiate themselves by pursuing energy efficiency are recognized as leaders and create a competitive atmosphere that benefits everyone," added Tom Nichols of the [Connecticut Green Buildings Council](#) and 4 Elements Group. "The progress we make locally multiplies far beyond the individual home/building- we have an opportunity to grasp that leadership role and influence dramatic change beyond our state."

Programs to promote more efficient buildings are popping up all over the country. More than a dozen states, including Connecticut, have updated their building codes since the start of 2009, and more than 20 others are currently in the process of doing so. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided \$16 billion for efficiency-boosting retrofit and weatherization programs, and Congress is now considering major initiatives like HOME STAR and Building STAR that would provide financial incentives for efficiency improvements in residential and commercial buildings.

Environment Connecticut is calling for policies that will help us reach our efficiency goals, including:

- Steady improvements to building codes over time so that all new buildings are increasingly efficient, culminating in a zero net energy standard by 2030. This means that in 20 years, every new building that is constructed will be so efficient that it can produce all the power it needs right onsite from renewable sources like solar panels or wind turbines.
- Investing in energy retrofits and weatherization to improve the efficiency of existing buildings 30 percent by 2030.

- Supporting innovative financing mechanisms that will unleash public and private investment in building efficiency.

“There are already thousands of super-efficient buildings around the country- including the facilities here at Merritt 7 Corporate Park.” concluded Pyne. “Buildings last for decades, so investing in energy efficiency locks in savings for years to come and builds a strong foundation for the future of our environment and our economy.”

Environment Connecticut is a statewide, citizen-based environmental advocacy organization working for clean air, clean water, and open space.

<http://www.environmentconnecticut.org/>