

April 22, 2010

Citizens Group Applauds Legislators for Cost-Lowering Energy Efficiency Plan

Legislation will help reduce energy costs for families, create Michigan jobs

LANSING – **ReEnergize Michigan!** today applauded Michigan legislators for introducing a plan that would strengthen energy efficiency programs in Michigan, a move that would help reduce energy costs for families and businesses while creating much-needed Michigan jobs. REM! is a coalition of labor, consumer, citizens, faith and other groups fighting to build a strong energy future for Michigan.

“Energy efficiency means slashing waste, saving money, cutting costs and creating jobs, and that’s why we applaud this plan to strengthen Michigan’s energy efficiency standard,” said **Gayle Miller** of the **Sierra Club**. “A stronger energy efficiency standard will help reform Michigan’s energy industry to benefit small business and entrepreneurs, creating thousands of jobs. Investing in more energy efficiency can help homeowners and business owners reduce their utility bills and keep energy costs low. That’s going to help Michigan become more competitive in today’s energy economy.”

The new legislative plan will strengthen Michigan’s current Energy Efficiency Savings Standard. Michigan’s current energy efficiency standard requires that utilities reach annual efficiency savings of 1 percent for electric power and 0.75 percent for natural gas by 2012, measured as a percentage of total annual retail sales. These bills ramp up the savings for each source of power in 0.25-percent increments so each standard is doubled by 2016. A 2009 report by Synapse Energy Economics, Inc. estimates that as much as 5,355 MW of clean, pollution-free energy could be captured and put on the market through energy efficiency measures in Michigan.

Energy efficiency is also good for Michigan jobs. In March, a report released by Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance: Expanding Michigan’s Energy Optimization Standard showed that Michigan could increase the number of jobs in its energy efficiency sector to over 7,600 jobs if it doubled its current standard by 2019.

Energy efficiency is Michigan’s cheapest and most promising job-creating energy opportunity. At a cost of 3 cents per kW/h, saving energy through energy efficiency makes better financial sense than building new generating capacity, which costs upwards of 12 cents per kW/h. Michigan can get the same amount of power from energy efficiency as it can from dirty sources of power at a fraction of the cost.

Spearheading the legislative plan are Reps. **Kathy Angerer** (D-Dundee), **Gary McDowell** (D-Rudyard), **Bob Constan** (D-Dearborn Heights), **Lisa Brown** (D - W. Bloomfield), **Robert Jones** (D-Kalamazoo), **Fred Miller** (D-Mount Clemens), **Deb Kennedy** (D-Brownstown), **Joan Bauer** (D-Lansing).

“Energy efficiency is vital to Michigan’s economy and our citizens’ quality of life,” said **Susan Harley** of **Clean Water Action**. “Energy efficiency can help increase the value of a home or business and it helps people, especially seniors and people with medical conditions, stay more comfortable year round. We applaud Reps. **Angerer, McDowell, Constan, Brown, Jones, Miller, Kennedy, and Bauer** for working to give Michigan’s families the opportunities we need to get jobs in the clean energy economy.”

The three main methods of achieving energy efficiency are through weatherization, upgrading mechanical and lighting systems, and investing in energy efficient appliances.

Investments in energy efficiency create jobs throughout the state. Unlike coal or nuclear power, virtually all the money spent on installing efficiency measures stays within the state, as local labor is used for energy efficiency installations. Job categories created by efficiency investments include energy auditors

and technicians, electricians, heating and cooling contractors, pipefitters and plumbers, builders and contractors, manufacturers, and program administrators. Efficiency upgrades drive demand for products made by Michigan companies such as Guardian Glass and Dow. Retailers such as hardware, lumber, big box and department stores all benefit from energy efficiency programs as people buy windows, storm doors, caulk, insulation as well as new appliances, furnaces, washers and dryers.

“This plan is a win-win for Michigan that benefits ordinary families, businesses and future generations,” said **Wendy Jaehn** of the **Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance**. “Virtually every study on energy shows that energy efficiency provides the greatest bang for the buck, helping Michigan squeeze value out of every dollar invested. Now is the time to aggressively go after more jobs, and Michigan can do that with a stronger, more aggressive energy efficiency standard.”