



# Energy-Efficient Texas



photo: under Creative Commons license

## Texans Need Relief

Texas, like the rest of the United States, faces many challenges during the current economic crisis. The state must develop ways to help consumers save money and put people back to work—all while dealing with an energy crisis. Energy efficiency is a common-sense solution the state can use to address these challenges.

Energy efficiency measures, such as home weatherization programs, are an effective way to help Texans save money, create jobs, reduce pollution, decrease energy consumption and eliminate energy waste.

## Texas Is In The Midst Of An Energy Crisis

Skyrocketing home energy costs continue to be a crippling financial burden for people of all income levels. Since 2000, electric rates have almost doubled. On average, households in Texas spend between 8.5 percent and 56.3 percent of their annual income on energy bills.

Texans need relief from soaring energy costs now. The state must develop ways to reduce the costs of home energy for consumers.



Wikipedia

## Runaway Waste

A tremendous amount of energy is wasted due to inefficiency. Buildings—residential, commercial and industrial—are some of the biggest culprits. Texas can reduce energy use in buildings and homes by implementing common-sense efficiency practices, such as home weatherization, which would save consumers an average of \$400 per year.

Increasing energy efficiency in buildings will reduce total consumption, make energy cheaper to transmit and will save consumers money.



Christina Richards, Shutterstock.com



acaar018, under Creative Commons license



Wikipedia

## The System Benefit Fund

In 1999, the Texas Legislature acknowledged the state's energy crisis when they created the System Benefit Fund (SBF) to help Texans struggling with the high cost of energy. The money in the fund comes from a mandatory surcharge on monthly energy bills. The money is supposed to fund four specific programs, one of which is the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). However, year after year, the Legislature fails to appropriate the full balance of the SBF and diverts the money to finance other programs.

No money has been directed to WAP since 2003. As a result, only a fraction of the estimated 1.3 million households in the state that are eligible for the program have received assistance.

## Spend Consumer's Money As Promised

Money to help weatherize homes, save consumers money and create jobs, sits in the SBF year after year. The state has not spent taxpayer money as promised and as a result, many Texans have not received the home weatherization benefits they have paid for.

While Texas is set to receive federal funding this year for home weatherization, there will still be a lot of work to do in coming years. The state should provide crucial weatherization assistance and spend consumer money as they promised, using the full balance of the SBF for its intended purposes and directing at least 10 percent of the total balance to WAP.

## TexPIRG Wins Results For Texas

Under a landmark law championed by TexPIRG in 2008, corporations that violate product safety laws will face stiff fines and penalties, and hazardous products will be removed from store shelves more quickly.