



Saving energy for Maine

Program of the Maine Public Utilities Commission

*For Immediate Release*

**PUC's Efficiency Maine Program  
Offers Resources to Help Lower Electric Bills**

AUGUSTA, ME, March 19, 2007 -- Following the sharp rise of electricity rates in Northern Maine, the Maine Public Utilities Commission has issued a reminder that the Efficiency Maine program administered by the PUC offers a number of benefits and incentives to help homeowners and businesses reduce electricity consumption and save money on electric bills.

Free technical advice on how to use electricity more efficiently is available to businesses of all sizes. Cash incentives up to \$100,000 may be available for the purchase of qualifying, energy-efficient equipment. Residential customers can also lower their electric use and bills by taking advantage of instant Efficiency Maine rebates on compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), which can be used throughout the home and consume much less energy (60%) than traditional incandescent bulbs. The rebate coupons are available at many participating retail stores.

Efficiency Maine is a statewide effort established by the Legislature four years ago to promote the more efficient use of electricity, help Maine residents and businesses reduce energy costs, and improve Maine's environment.

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“We understand that the recent rate change can present a hardship for some families, stated Kurt Adams, PUC chairman. “We share the concern and disappointment over the increase and are taking steps to address this situation, which we know is having a serious impact on consumers in Northern Maine.”

Homeowners and businesses alike are encouraged to obtain information from Efficiency Maine by calling toll free 866-376-2463 or by visiting the website at [www.energymaine.com](http://www.energymaine.com).

Several more assistance programs are available for families in need of relief:

Families that are threatened by destitution or homelessness can access Emergency Assistance from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Emergency Assistance is typically accessed when disconnection of electricity services is imminent.

The Energy Crisis Intervention Program is available to income eligible families that received a disconnection notice and have exhausted their ability to negotiate and honor a payment plan.

Finally, Maine's Low-Income Assistance Program (LIAP), a year round assistance subsidy, is available to income eligible families. LIAP provides discounts or credits to low-income families to help make their electricity bill more affordable.

Consumers may also contact their local Community Action Agency.

The PUC has initiated a proceeding to review possible options for Northern Maine in the future to replace the current standard offer system that was adopted in 2000. At that time the Maine Legislature passed legislation to deregulate electricity supply. The "Restructuring Act" was intended to stimulate competition among electricity suppliers, leading to lower prices for consumers. In Southern Maine restructuring

has led to some competition, but in Northern Maine competition has not developed as hoped. The PUC has declared electric supply restructuring a failure in Northern Maine. A report is expected within the next month for review by the PUC and various stakeholders.

Despite the drastic increase, the 2007 rates for Northern Maine supplied to Maine Public Service by WPS Energy Services remain 10% lower than prices for the customers of Central Maine Power Company and Bangor Hydro-Electric Company.

Adams emphasized that the PUC remains committed to developing alternatives intended to stabilize the market for Northern Maine consumers in the long term.

Information about all of the assistance programs can be found at the PUC by contacting the Consumer Assistance Division at [www.maine.gov/mpuc](http://www.maine.gov/mpuc) or by calling 1-800-452-4699.

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