The United States is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world. We are all concerned with the impact of our high energy consumption and its contribution to global warming and, if we are to protect the planet, we need to find ways to cut down our energy usage. The Connecticut General Assembly has begun to address some of these issues by passing legislation requiring "green buildings" for all schools and government buildings built or renovated after January 2008. The bill also includes funding for renovating older government buildings to make them more energy efficient. These buildings will use less energy and emit fewer greenhouse gases than older buildings.

We also understand how state residents are struggling with high energy prices, so we have taken some steps which should result in long-term savings. We hope to follow up with more legislation in coming sessions. In the meantime, there are some things you can do to help reduce your energy costs at home and travel costs when driving. These tips are included in this newsletter.

Unless we begin to "think green," these problems will only get worse. To help you on your way to a greener Connecticut, I am offering the enclosed tips, which are simple ways to get started on cutting your energy consumption and raising your awareness of the ways in which we all contribute to high energy costs. Each one that you adopt will make a small dent in the amount of energy you and the state consume each day.

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State Representative

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A Green Guide: Tips for Conserving Energy and Cutting Carbon Emissions

28th District
Serving Wethersfield

How You Can Help

Energy Tips for the Home:

Use energy-efficient florescent lighting in place of incandescent bulbs. *Each bulb uses 75% less energy than an incandescent bulb.*

Purchase Energy Star appliances when replacing your major appliances. *Each appliance saves 10% to 50% in energy costs.*

Turn off lights, appliances, electronics when not in use. *Twelve percent or more of home energy costs can be saved by turning off lights, appliances and electronics when not in use.*

Wrap your water heater to keep water hot. *Wrapping your water heater can save up to 35% in energy costs.*

Lower the thermostat on your water heater. Although most are set at 140 degrees, you can safely lower it to 120. *You will see a 3% to 5% savings for each 10 degree decrease.*

Insulate your attic to prevent air loss. *Insulation can reduce your energy costs by as much as 20%.*

Seal air leaks around windows and doors. *You can save up to 10% on energy costs by sealing air leaks.*

Install Low-E windows in new housing or as replacement windows. *Low-E windows require less energy for heating and cooling, thereby decreasing energy costs.*

In winter, lower your thermostat by several degrees. *For each 5 degree decrease, you will save approximately 10% in energy costs.*

Invest in a set-back thermostat which turns the heat down overnight. *Setting back your thermostat at night can cut costs 10% to 15%.*

Draw curtains at night to keep in warm air. *Drawing curtains across the windows will cut down on heat loss and decrease the energy needed to keep the house warm overnight.*

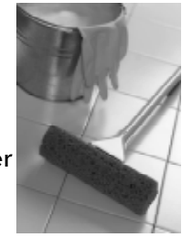
In summer, raise your thermostat by several degrees if you have central air. *For each 5 degree increase, you will save approximately 10% in energy costs.*

Draw curtains and shut windows during the day to keep sun from warming the interior. Open curtains and windows at night to let in cooler air. *On very warm days, drawing curtains and shutting windows will keep the rooms much cooler during the day. Opening them at night will let in the cooler air. The result is a reduction in energy needed to keep the house cool.*

Hang out clothes in summer to cut down on dryer use. *Each load of clothes costs about 30 to 40 cents to dry in an electric dryer.*

Make some of these changes now and you can take advantage of a sales tax exemption on energy efficient goods and merchandise.

Green Guide for the Home:



Household cleaning products impact the environment in two ways: ingredients can be harmful or hazardous to the environment and packaging can increase the non-recyclable waste stream. In order to limit the environmental impact, choose cleaning products that:

- Are biodegradable.
- Contain no ozone-depleting chemicals.
- Are not disposed of as hazardous waste.
- Can be used for more than one task, reducing the number needed.
- Are made from renewable resources.
- Are sold with reduced packaging.
- Are packaged in refillable or recyclable containers.

Consider taking your own bag when you go grocery shopping. Plastic shopping bags are made of petrochemicals which are not a renewable resource and do not readily decompose.

Tips for Travel:

Plan errands so that you make the fewest possible trips. Plan your route in the most efficient manner to avoid driving extra miles while you are out. One way to make conservation fun: plan to run errands with a friend.

Instead of driving to another state on vacation, explore your own backyard. Go to some of Connecticut's beautiful beaches. Check out some of Connecticut's scenic back roads, or wine trails, or state parks. Look for some of the wonderful museums around the state: Mark Twain House, Carousel Museum, P. T. Barnum Museum, Mystic Seaport, Wadsworth Atheneum, and many more. Plan a historic tour, or a garden tour, or a hiking tour. Learn more about Connecticut while cutting carbon emissions.

Take mass transit whenever possible. Sitting in traffic increases carbon emissions.

Trade your old car for a hybrid or a higher mile-per-gallon vehicle. Every gallon of gas you don't buy cuts carbon emissions proportionately and reduces our dependence on foreign oil. ***You will also get a sales tax exemption on purchases of hybrids or vehicles with a 40+ MPG rating.***