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DECEMBER 18, 2009

## UM report: home heating efficiency saves big



A new **University of Maryland** study show that if residents improve their home heating efficiency, the state would benefit economically and environmentally in a big way.

The report was commissioned by the Maryland Department of the Environment and conducted by the university's **Center for Integrative Environmental Research** and others. It projects that state assistance in buying energy-efficient natural gas furnaces and water heaters and in upgrading insulation would produce:

- 80,000 new jobs over 10 years;
- \$11 billion in economic activity over 10 years;
- a 9 percent reduction in carbon emissions over 10 years;
- savings for homeowners of up to \$400 in the first year.

"You might call this 'cash-for-clunkers' home-style," said Matthias Ruth, the principal investigator and CIER director, in a statement.

"Trading in your clunker of a furnace or heater can make good economic and environmental sense for everyone concerned.

We're missing some big opportunities to lower home heating

bills, improve the Maryland economy and reduce carbon emissions."

State environmental officials asked for the report to help them decide how to spend expected revenue from its participation in the regional cap-and-trade program (pollution emitters buy permits).

In the report, researchers concluded:

- An average single-family household could save \$400-\$500 in natural gas bills the first year by investing approximately \$3,000 in a package of cost-effective energy efficiency measures: wall insulation, duct sealing, furnaces, water heaters, and pipe wrap;
- Spending extra to purchase more energy-efficient natural gas furnaces and water heaters pays for itself in fuel savings; the cost of home improvements are more than offset by energy savings;
- State incentives to encourage homeowners to purchase the most energy-efficient furnaces and water heaters and to make recommended home efficiency improvements would have positive economic effects, including the creation of more than 80,000 jobs, especially in the construction field, and nearly \$11 billion in economic activity;
- Reducing natural gas consumption would help Maryland meet its 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. cutting residential emissions by more than 10 million tons over the next decade. or about 9 percent:

### About the bloggers



**Meredith Cohn** has been a reporter for more than 18 years and has covered a variety of subjects, from airlines and agriculture to politics and health and fitness. She's gained an appreciation for the environment as a biker, runner and dog walker. She also hopes this blog means coworkers will stop staring when she carries home recyclables from the office.



**Tim Wheeler** reports on the environment and Chesapeake Bay. A native of West Virginia, he has focused mainly on Maryland's environment since moving here in 1983. Along the way, he's crewed aboard a skipjack in the bay, canoed under city streets up the Jones Fall from the Inner Harbor, and gone deep underground in a western Maryland coal mine. He loves seafood, rambles in the country and good stories. He hopes to share some here.

Contributor **Christy Zuccarini** has been **blogging about the local DIY craft scene** for a year for baltimoresun.com. She brings her perspective on all things handmade to B'More Green, where she will highlight projects you can do yourself as well as crafters who are integrating sustainable methods and materials.

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largely, eating residential emissions by more than 10 million tons over the next decade, or about 6 percent,

-Home insulation should be avoided or accompanied by energy-efficient ventilation measures in parts of the state (mostly in Western Maryland) with high radon concentrations, where tightly sealing a house may increase effective exposure to the gas;

-Findings apply to smaller, older Maryland homes; fewer benefits are realized in newer, larger homes.

"Given the overall positive impacts of enticing efficiency of natural gas use by households, there is an important role to be played by the State," said Andy Blohm, a Maryland researcher for CIER, in a statement. "We have already seen notable leadership by Maryland in promoting energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reductions. Our study clearly shows both the economic and environmental wisdom of that leadership."

Posted by **Meredith Cohn** at 8:30 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

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It's been a long time since I installed fiberglass batts, but isn't the guy in the picture doing it wrong? Shouldn't the insulation be turned around so that the vapor barrier is on the cold, exterior side of the wall?

Posted by: ballmerboy | **December 18, 2009 12:58 PM**

I've always had a problem with Cash4Clunkers. To me it seems to go against simple supply and demand economics. How can we push all of these new cars into a market already saturated with used and repossessed vehicles (i.e. www.Repofinder.com)? Now new cars are worth even less, we have more Americans in debt, and eventually more repossessions.

Posted by: Mike | **December 19, 2009 11:52 AM**

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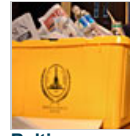
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