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R.I Senate Passes Energy Efficiency Bill

Senators Vote 33-0 for The Energy and Consumer Savings Act to save R.I \$225 million over 25 years and annually reduce over 20,000 tons of global warming pollution by 2020

[State House] Providence, RI-- The Rhode Island Senate approved an energy efficiency bill (S 540A-Roberts) 33-0 today that will cut energy waste, reduce air pollution and improve the reliability of the electric grid by setting minimum energy standards for 14 common household and commercial appliances.

“This bill would reduce as much global warming pollution as taking 18,000 cars off of the road and save Rhode Island over \$225 million over the next 25 years by making Rhode Island More energy efficient,” said Matt Auten, Advocate with the Rhode Island Public Interest Research Group (RIPIRG). “This bill is clearly a win for the environment, for public health and for consumers,” Auten continued.

The bill sets minimum standards for commercial clothes washers, commercial freezers, commercial ice-makers, commercial refrigerators, exit signs, external power supplies that are used to charge cell phones and other electronic equipment, large packaged air conditioners used in large commercial buildings, transformers, metal halide lamp fixtures, pre-rinse spray valves, space heaters used to heat large industrial spaces, mercury vapor lamps, torchiere lamps and traffic signals.

“Reducing energy waste should be the cornerstone of any sane energy policy, so it’s not surprising to see so many states moving forward with efficiency legislation,” Auten said. “Cutting energy waste just makes sense, no matter if you look at our energy system as a commercial user, a consumer, an environmentalist or as an electric utility. Everyone benefits from wasting less energy.”

A similar bill (H-5307A, Handy) was passed by the Rhode Island House last month 47-14. The two bills are slightly different and will have to be reconciled by further legislative action before heading to the Governor’s desk.

“RIPIRG applauds Senate Leadership, Sen. William Walaska (Warwick) Chairmen of Senate Committee on Financial Services, Technology and Regulatory Issues, the bill’s sponsor Sen. Elizabeth Roberts (Cranston), and all of the legislators who supported this bi-partisan bill to cut energy waste.”

RIPIRG also thanks the Northeast Energy Efficiency Project (NEEP) and the Appliance Standards Awareness Project (ASAP) for their assistance, as well as Narragansett Electric, The Energy Council of R.I, The Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, Viessmann Manufacturing Company, Clean Water Action and the Environment Council of R.I. for their active support of the bill.

Other states that have passed state energy efficiency standards include Arizona, California, Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey and Washington