

# Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships, Inc.



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## **Congress tries to take away state's control of its energy future**

*Amendment to energy bill would preempt energy efficiency standards measure*

LEXINGTON, Mass., April 7, 2005 – Massachusetts businesses and consumers could lose the chance to save \$248 million in energy costs and enough electricity to power 38,000 households over the next 15 years due to new language added to the federal energy bill on Wednesday. The amendment, passed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, cancels all existing and prohibits any future state energy efficiency standards related to ceiling fans and lights, while at the same time failing to establish any federal standard for those products.

Massachusetts, and four other Northeast states (Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island and New York), are currently considering efficiency standards legislation for a variety of products, including ceiling fans and ceiling fan lights. The amended federal energy bill not only attempts to restrain the region's leadership in advancing energy efficiency standards, but it effectively robs the state of its right to save energy and money while cleaning up the environment for its residents.

“Energy efficiency standards play a vital role in securing our nation's energy supply, helping our environment and improving our economy,” said Sue Coakley, executive director of Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP), a regional non-profit organization committed to promoting energy efficiency in homes, buildings and industry. “Passing an amendment that preempts states from fully addressing these issues is irresponsible.”

The ceiling fan amendment, introduced by Rep. Nathan Deal (R-Georgia), reverses significant progress made on the issue last year. Under a 2004 agreement between Atlanta-based Home Depot and efficiency standards supporters, both sides agreed to language pre-empting states from establishing their own standards for ceiling fans and ceiling fan lights for one year in exchange for Home Depot's pledge to help advocates push for a strong federal standard for those products. Not only did Home Depot fail to help push for the strong federal ceiling fan standard as had been promised, but the amendment offered by Deal on Wednesday, apparently at the request of Home Depot, simply pre-empts states from setting new efficiency standards for ceiling fans and lights, while setting no new federal standard for them.

The Deal amendment passed the Energy and Commerce Committee by a 27-19 vote. Rep. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) and Rep. Tom Allen (D-Maine) were among the committee members who spoke out against the amendment. Later in the session on Wednesday, Markey also offered an amendment that was approved by the committee that would force the federal Department of Energy to set new efficiency standards that have been mandated, or else forfeit to states the right to set those standards. Currently, the DOE is more than a decade behind in setting some new product standards that have been approved by Congress.

“While most in Congress are turning their backs on Americans who are struggling with soaring energy costs, Congressman Markey is trying to ensure that states can fill the leadership void left by Washington,” said Coakley, who also urged Massachusetts policymakers, businesses and residents to contact the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee Chairman Joe Barton (D-Texas) and ask that the state’s right to secure its own energy future be restored and the amendment prohibiting Massachusetts from setting a ceiling fan standard be repealed. (Go to <http://energycommerce.house.gov/feedback.htm>)

### **About NEEP**

Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) is a regional nonprofit organization founded in 1996 whose mission is to promote energy efficiency in homes, buildings and industry in the Northeast U.S. through regionally coordinated programs and policies that increase the use of energy efficient products, services and practices, and that help achieve a cleaner environment and a more reliable and affordable energy system. For more information, visit [www.neep.org](http://www.neep.org).

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