

Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships, Inc.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Catherine Attardo
781-860-9177 ext. 24
cattardo@neep.org

Northeast states sue Department of Energy over standards *Agency over a decade behind in setting rules for more efficiency appliances*

LEXINGTON, Mass., Sept. 7, 2005 – Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) is praising the action by 15 states, including Connecticut, which today sued the federal Department of Energy for violating a Congressional mandate to enact strong energy efficiency standards for 22 common household and commercial appliances, including furnaces, water heaters, clothes washers, dryers, air conditioners, dishwashers, heat pumps, motors, ranges, ovens and lamps.

Congress established initial efficiency standards for most of the products, and directed the Department of Energy (DOE) to periodically to review and strengthen them. For the remaining products the DOE is to establish the initial efficiency standards and also periodically strengthen them. However, DOE has fallen six to 13 years behind schedule and has not adopted any appliance efficiency standards since January 2001.

Based on the Department of Energy's own estimates, the average annual energy savings from the standards it has failed to set would meet the total annual energy needs of between 3 and 12 million American households. The annual electricity savings would equal the output of approximately 13 to 42 large power plants.

NEEP, a regional nonprofit organization based in Lexington, Mass. whose mission is to promote energy efficiency in homes, buildings and industry, praised the involvement of Attorney General Richard Blumenthal in pushing the federal Department of Energy to set efficiency standards that should have been in place, in some cases, more than a decade ago.

"The action taken today by Attorney General Blumenthal never should have been necessary," said Jim O'Reilly, NEEP's Director of Policy, Outreach and Communications. "But because the Department of Energy has fallen so woefully behind in looking out for the energy needs of consumers, we're very happy to see that the states are once again helping to drive the

federal government to set these standards. The need for increased energy efficiency has never been more evident than it is today."

The failure to set the standards is especially harmful to the Northeast, which pays some of the highest energy costs in the country, particularly for home heating. According to NEEP, in the Northeast alone, savings that could be achieved just through residential furnace and boiler standards, which DOE is 10 years behind in establishing, could save consumers over \$2 billion in energy costs. In addition to the cost savings, these standards could provide significant environmental benefits, helping to achieve an annual reduction of 360,000 metric tons of climate changing carbon emissions from energy generation and use.

Including Attorney General Blumenthal, the parties to the lawsuit include:

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer
California Attorney General Bill Lockyer
California Energy Commission
Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal
Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan
Iowa Attorney General Thomas J. Miller
Maine Attorney General G. Steven Rowe
Massachusetts Attorney General Thomas F. Reilly
New Hampshire Attorney General Kelly A. Ayotte

New Jersey Attorney General Peter C. Harvey
New Mexico Attorney General Patricia A. Madrid
North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper
Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection
Commissioner Kathleen McGinty
Rhode Island Attorney General Patrick C. Lynch
Vermont Attorney General William H. Sorrell
Wisconsin Attorney General Peggy A. Lautenschlager
The City of New York

For more information about energy efficiency standards and their impacts on specific Northeast states, see www.neep.org/Standards.

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.