



BUSINESS

Tuesday, March 4, 2014 11:05 AM EST

State Energy Efficiency Board releases 2013 Programs and Operations Report

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Connecticut last year used millions fewer kilowatt-hours of energy through participation in energy savings programs, according to a report released Monday.

The state's residents, businesses and communities saved about 285.8 million kilowatt-hours of electricity in 2013 by partaking in Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund, or CEEF, programs, the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Board said in its 24-page 2013 Programs and Operations Report.

The kilowatt-hour savings translates into a cost savings of \$53.4 million annually and \$630 million over the lifetime of the energy-saving measures performed.

The state lessened its carbon dioxide emissions in 2013 by more than 184,000 tons through the program. It also received electric, gas, fuel oil and propane system benefits valued at nearly \$2.40 for every dollar spent on energy efficiency, the board said in the report.

More than 477,000 residents saved a total of about \$29.2 million by participating in the fund's energy-saving initiatives, which included in-home services such as Home Energy Solutions assessments, rebate and retail products programs and a program for building new homes.

More than 4,000 Connecticut businesses and municipalities saved about \$24.2 million in 2013 through the fund's commercial and municipal programs, which included free energy audits, rebates and financing for buying energy-efficient equipment.

CEEF is supported by all Connecticut Light & Power [JUMP] and United Illuminating customers on their electricity bills through the Combined Public Benefits Charge, according to CEEF's website. It is also funded by Connecticut Natural Gas, Southern Connecticut Gas Co. and Yankee Gas Service Co. patrons through a conservation charge included in rates.

"This is a really good investment in ratepayer money because we're helping the environment, creating jobs and saving money," said state Rep. Laura Hoydick, R-Stratford, ranking member of the state legislature's Electricity and Technology Committee.

The report also included the results of Energize Waterbury, an Energize Connecticut program supported by local municipalities and the state that offered energy audits to residents at a deep discount over the summer and fall. Energize Connecticut is administered by CL&P and Yankee Gas.

As a result of Energize Waterbury, 3,445 Home Energy Solutions audits and 568 HVAC upgrades were conducted, as well as 90 insulation upgrades, the Energy Efficiency Board said in the report. The initiative, which also resulted in the sale of 5,785 energy-saving lighting products and 61 outreach events, created an annual energy savings of \$495,549 as well as the annual saving of almost 1.6 million kilowatt-hours of electricity, nearly 10.5 million cubic feet of natural gas and 16,843 gallons of oil.

"We think the program was a definite success based on the number of residents and businesses that signed up," Michael LeBlanc, co-chairman of Waterbury's Energy Task Force, said Monday. "We're very encouraged by the success of last year's campaign and we hope there will be an opportunity to reach out to residents to a greater extent in the coming year. The program will certainly continue."

Waterbury last week received a \$15,000 Bright Idea grant from the Energy Efficiency Fund based on its level of participation in the fund's programs, LeBlanc said.

The report also recognized the statewide Clean Energy Communities program, a joint Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy Finance and Investment Authority initiative. Through the program, a community pledges to reduce its municipal energy consumption by 20 percent by 2018 and to attain 20 percent of its municipal electrical needs from renewable sources by 2018. By the end of 2013, 77 Connecticut municipalities had signed the pledge.

The report also included information on the success of the state's energy efficiency educational programs, including "eesmarts," a K-12 energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy education initiative.

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