



Climate Change and Minnesota

Effective Policies for the Future

Many states have created innovative policies and programs to improve homes and public buildings.

California. The state is committing up to \$3.3 billion and a goal of 3,000 MW of solar power by 2017. Includes tax incentives for solar on rooftops in homes, commercial and industrial buildings, farms and schools. A full 10% of program funds is reserved for low-income households and includes a 25% higher rebate for developers of low and moderate-income housing. Also set the goal of reducing energy use in state buildings by 20 percent by 2015.

Nevada – In Nevada all state buildings must now meet energy standards. Commercial and multi-family buildings also qualify for tax abatements of up to 35% if built to standards.

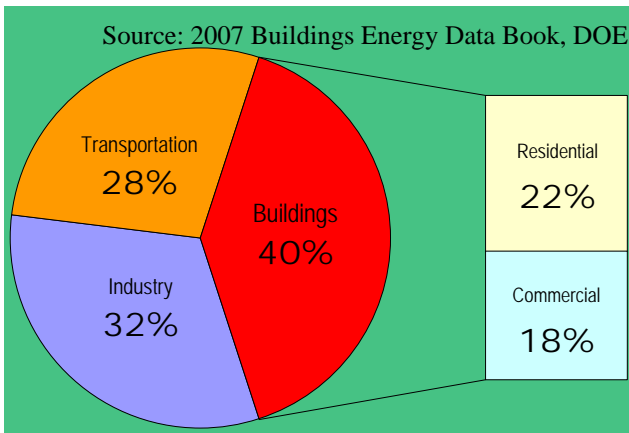
Other states with tax incentives and efficiency programs include Maryland, New York, and Oregon.

Public Policy and Climate Change

There are several public policies and programs that can help us act on Climate Change and Social Justice by building support for less energy use. Cities and states in the U.S. and across the world are developing innovative solutions.

Buildings and Climate Change

Greenhouse Gasses: Buildings account for 39% of our energy consumption and 71% of electricity. It is estimated that U.S. buildings account for 38% of national CO₂ emissions in 2000 (DOE, 2007). Modifying or *retrofitting* our existing buildings and having high standards for new construction can make a significant impact in both global warming AND your energy bills!



Health: Buildings are a major factor in the health of our communities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that almost 90% of the 24-hour day is spent indoors where pollutants may be two to five times higher than the outdoors¹.

¹ "Healthy Buildings, Healthy People: A Vision for the 21st Century," U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/hbhp/index.html>

Buildings and Social Equity

Most people focus on “affordable housing,” which generally means that a household should pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. In the U.S. about 12 million renters and homeowners now pay more than 50 percent of their incomes for housing.

Now add energy costs. In Minnesota in the winter heating season of 2005-2006, natural gas prices rose 20.9%, fuel oil rose 26.1%, propane rose 16.9%, and electric prices rose 11.8%. The total energy bills of Minnesota low-income households exceeded the “affordable” level by \$388 million (Fisher, Sheehan and Colton). All income groups can benefit from improving the built environment.