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# Ontario matching energy incentives

## Province working on plan after Ottawa boosts home retrofit rebates

Mar 31, 2009 04:30 AM

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**TYLER HAMILTON**  
 ENERGY REPORTER

The federal government sweetened its home-energy retrofit incentives yesterday by 25 per cent to spur more economic activity during the downturn, a move Ontario said it plans to match.

Lisa Raitt, federal minister of natural resources, said the increased incentive under the government's EcoEnergy home retrofit program will only be in effect for at most two years. "I do encourage homeowners to act quickly," she urged.

An official with Ontario's ministry of infrastructure and energy told the *Star* that the provincial government "will match" the new federal rebates. Ministry spokesperson Amy Tang said details are being finalized on a new provincial program that will further expand on provincial initiatives.

Efforts to boost residential energy efficiency come as electricity and heating-fuel prices in Ontario are set to rise, the result of the McGuinty government's plan to harmonize the province's retail sales tax with the federal goods and services tax.

Electricity, natural gas and heating oil consumers are currently exempt from the provincial tax, but once the blended tax rate goes into effect on July 1, 2010, home energy costs will jump by 8 per cent. Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan told the *Star* yesterday the coming increase is a good reason for households to take advantage of energy retrofit programs.

The new program means a home being retrofitted with a high-efficiency natural gas furnace will qualify for a rebate of \$625 from Ottawa and \$625 from the province — up a total of \$250 compared to the original program.

A high-efficiency drain-water heat recovery system will get you a combined \$330, up from \$260. A new central air-conditioning unit qualifies for \$500, up from \$400 — though the minimum SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating) rating has also jumped from 14 to 14.5. Install a ground-source geothermal system and you can now get back \$8,750 in federal and provincial rebates, up from \$7,000.

The one anomaly, however, comes with solar hot-water systems. The new EcoEnergy program offers a \$1,250 rebate, up dramatically from \$500 under the old program. A matching rebate from the province means the purchaser of a residential solar hot-water system can get back \$2,500 on a purchase that ranges in cost from \$6,000 to \$9,000, including installation.

"It's meant to increase the market penetration of renewable technology, and specifically solar hot water," explained Louise Roux at the ministry's office of energy efficiency.

On top of all rebates, Raitt reminded homeowners they can qualify next tax season for the Home Renovation Tax Credit, which amounts to getting 15 per cent back from the cost of a home renovation in 2009, up to a maximum of \$1,350.

In Ontario, most EnergyStar appliances are also exempt from retail sales tax until Sept. 1.

Duncan, meanwhile, eased worries yesterday that energy retrofits and the addition of renewable-energy systems to a home will increase property taxes. He said the Assessment Act is being

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amended so such retrofits won't have an impact on assessed property value.

It's all good news, unless you're a low-income household, said Mary Todorow, a policy analyst with the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario. Low-income consumers live mostly in rental units or simply can't afford to pay for costly retrofits, even with generous incentives, she said. Todorow is concerned low-income households will get squeezed between higher energy prices and inefficient dwellings.

But the Ontario Clean Air Alliance said households with a combined income of less than \$160,000 will get \$1,000 back from the government to offset increased costs.

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**Great News**

I believe the increase in Govt rebates will assist home owners in participating in the Eco-Energy program. A lot of people are concerned with the Province have the resale of thier homes having an enery audit done and this will help ease thier concerns, both of which is what we need in this province if we are going to be a leader in the green technology future

Submitted by Mark Rog at 8:59 AM Wednesday, April 01 2009

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**what about other products?**

How can we find out what other products will qualify for rebates? Will funace oil savers like those at www.intellidyne.ca be included?

Submitted by Coowie at 7:45 AM Tuesday, March 31 2009

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