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## **New England energy efficiency rebates & incentives - by Hall and Ricciardi**

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In his recent state of the union address, governor Charlie Baker from Massachusetts discussed an ambitious goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Such a goal will require sweeping changes to our transportation and real estate industries to eliminate fossil fuel consumption and embrace energy efficient solutions. Governor Baker said, “RGGI, the Regional

Greenhouse Gas Initiative that our proposal is based on, has worked for 10 years. Power plants have adopted clean energy solutions and funded energy efficiency programs, investing \$3.3 billion across the region. Greenhouse gas emissions in the power sector have dropped by nearly 50%.” Given this information, you may ask the question, “Is my building or my client’s building portfolio using energy efficiently?” Energy efficiency is known to be one of the quickest and cost-effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, save money, and meet the growing energy demand. The many benefits of energy efficiency include:

- **Economic:** Increased energy efficiency can lower individual utility bills, help stabilize electricity prices and volatility, and promote job growth. Energy efficiency can also increase the value of a property.
- **Environmental:** Increasing energy efficiency can lower greenhouse gas emissions and emissions from other harmful pollutants. Increased efficiency can also result in decreased water use.
- **Risk Management:** Energy efficiency can help diversify utility portfolios and can be a hedge against uncertainty associated with rising and fluctuating energy prices.

Energy efficiency has become one of the important features that prospective real estate buyers look for when purchasing a building or home.

Electric utilities in New England and throughout the United States offer energy efficiency programs to help building and homeowners to reduce their energy use. In some states, utilities are actually required to reduce their energy sales. Within each of the New England states, there exist programs and opportunities to evaluate a building’s existing energy use, develop strategies and projects to improve efficiency, and incentivize and finance projects to make them more affordable. The primary energy efficiency program and information for each of the New England states is noted below:

#### Maine

The state of Maine offers incentives for energy efficient appliances, heating, lighting and other projects. Information on available incentives and resources such as lists of qualified contractors can be found at the website <https://www.energycymaine.com/>.

#### New Hampshire

New Hampshire offers a number of programs to help customers implement energy efficiency projects. The NH Saves website <https://nhsaves.com/> includes information for homes, businesses, and cities and towns on rebates, programs, and resources.

#### Vermont

Efficiency Vermont <https://www.energycyvermont.com/> offers rebates, services, tips & tools, and other programs to provide advice, technical services, and financial support for energy efficiency improvements.

#### Massachusetts

The MassSave program <https://www.masssave.com/> is a Massachusetts based program which serves as a source of information for incentives and rebates offered by Massachusetts utilities. Programs are available for residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers.

#### Connecticut

Information about Connecticut's energy efficiency programs can be found on the Energize Connecticut (CT) website <https://www.energizect.com/>. This resource includes information on rebates, financing and services for energy efficiency and clean energy improvements

#### Rhode Island

Rhode Island's energy efficiency programs offer homeowners, renters, businesses, and municipalities a variety of opportunities to save energy and reduce utility bills. Information can be found at the State of Rhode Island website <http://www.energy.ri.gov/energy-efficiency/>.

Additional information can be obtained through the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE) <https://www.dsireusa.org/> This database represents the most comprehensive source of information on incentives and policies that support renewables and energy efficiency in the United States. DSIRE is currently operated by the N.C. Solar Center at N.C. State University, with support from the Interstate Renewable Energy Council, Inc. DSIRE is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy.

If you are interested in evaluating the efficiency of your building or building portfolio, we would highly recommend conducting an energy audit and completing recommended Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs). These services are applicable to both public and private sector clients. Weston & Sampson routinely provides and performs energy and water audits, energy master planning, wastewater planning, zero net energy analysis, energy modeling, performance specifications and scopes of work related to Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs), including energy project management support. We provide Energy Audits following ASHRAE Level 1, 2, and 3 standards and prepare performance specifications and scopes of work development for ECMs. We can also help you identify and obtain available incentives, grant opportunities, rebates, and credits for qualifying projects. Lets work together to eliminate greenhouse gas emission and save energy!

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