

## House Republican Press Release

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### Providing incentives for energy efficient products



By Michael A. Caron

As a lifelong resident of the State of Connecticut, I know that this state is a beautiful place to work and play. I also know that the cost of living in Connecticut is high, with energy costs that continue to rise. As a result, many families struggle with these tough choices.

Another concern not only facing the State of Connecticut, but also the entire global community, is the need to protect the environment, to be more efficient in the way we use energy, and to provide future generations a clean and healthy earth.

One way to remedy both of these concerns is to purchase appliances that meet the Energy Star requirements. Created in 1992 by the US Environmental Protection Agency, Energy Star has taken great strides in not only protecting the environment, but saving money for consumers who buy these products. In fact, according to their website, in 2006 Energy Star not only saved enough energy to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of 25 million cars, but also saved Americans \$14 billion dollars in utility costs. Energy Star appliances are a win-win for protecting the environment and saving money for those who purchase these products.

Last year the State of Connecticut did its part to promote Energy Star appliances to the residents of Connecticut. Public Act 07-424, for which I voted, provided a sales tax exemption for Energy Star appliances sold on or after June 4, 2007. These products included:

- Refrigerators and freezers
- Clothes Washers
- Dishwashers
- Room Air Conditioners
- Dehumidifiers
- Room Air Cleaner Units
- Water Coolers
- Battery Chargers

Also exempted from the state sales tax were compact florescent light bulbs and home weatherization products, such as insulation, programmable thermostats, and furnaces.

While the state sales tax exemption for weatherization products has been extended until July 1, 2010, and the sales tax exemption for compact florescent light bulbs has been extended indefinitely, the state sales tax exemption for the numerous appliances listed above ended September 30, 2007.

During this brief time, from June 4, 2007 through September 30, 2007, Connecticut residents saved \$7 million by being exempted from the Connecticut sales tax.

In light of rising energy costs coupled with the responsibility to be more environmentally conscious, I challenge the state legislature to pass Raised Senate Bill Number 505, An Act Concerning a Sales Tax Exemption For Energy Star Appliances, which, if passed, would renew the state sales tax exemption for Energy Star appliances beginning on July 1, 2008.

The State of Connecticut must work to provide incentives for those who choose to purchase appliances that meet the Energy Star requirements. The State of Connecticut is currently running a small surplus this year, and this year is the time to provide sales tax exemptions for the purchase of Energy Star appliances.

If the State of Connecticut were to provide sales tax exemptions for Energy Star appliances, Connecticut residents may be more inclined to purchase an Energy Star appliance with the federal tax rebates of up to \$600 per person and \$1200 per couple that have recently been approved by Congress and the President. Spending this federal tax rebate would be putting money back into the economy, which is exactly what is needed to stimulate an economy that is currently in a downturn.

As your state legislator, I feel that by exempting the Energy Star appliances from the Connecticut sales tax we would not only help protect the environment, but also put money back in the people's wallets, where it belongs. The Connecticut state legislature needs to do everything they can to help the middle class families of Connecticut in any way possible.

If you have additional thoughts or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at 1-800-842-1423 or [Michael.Caron@housegop.ct.gov](mailto:Michael.Caron@housegop.ct.gov).

*UConn intern Robert Simpson contributed to this article.*

*Michael A. Caron represents the towns of Killingly, Plainfield, and Sterling in the Connecticut House of Representatives.*