

Rebates for Energy Efficient Clothes Washers

a. **Description:** Establishment of consumer education and rebate programs to promote the use of energy efficient clothes washers.

b. **Public Policy Rationale:** Rebates can improve the marketability of energy and water-efficient clothes washers, which are generally more expensive than conventional models. Coupled with a consumer education and product labeling program, such rebates can translate into an increased demand for such products which will also increase the interest of manufacturers in producing and marketing energy efficient washers and other energy saving products.

c. **Examples of Implementation:**

- The Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) ran a two year *WashWise* program which paid cash rebates starting at \$130 (then later reduced to \$75) to residential clothes washer buyers to purchase resource efficient machines instead of conventional models. After spending approximately \$800,000 in rebates, the rebate program was phased out and brought to a close in September 1998. At that time, the program identity was changed from *WashWise* to the *Energy STAR Resource-Efficient Clothes Washer Program* and \$10 “spiffs” were implemented to encourage sales personnel to promote energy efficient washers. Program marketing platform and materials have also been changed to emphasize Energy STAR. Most of the models that currently qualify for the program are front loaders and use a [tumble action](#) process to clean clothes. However, three [agitator-type](#) machines also qualify for WashWise. Utilities such as Seattle City Light support WashWise because qualifying machines use [60% less energy and 40% less water](#) than a comparable agitator model. All WashWise qualifying machines must qualify for listing with the [Consortium for Energy Efficiency](#). CEE distinguishes among the several machines and places them in a variety of subcategories according to their efficiency. For more information click here: <http://www.nwalliance.org/resources/reports/99026.pdf>
- In the Northeast, the *TumbleWash* program operates similarly to the WashWise program. States participating in the TumbleWash program currently include Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. Participating utilities within these states are offering rebates to residential electricity customers who purchase energy efficient clothes washers. For example, the Long Island Power Authority is offering a mail-in rebate of between \$50-\$150 through the end of 2000 and customers of utilities in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut have been offered mail-in rebates o \$75. Click here for more information: <http://www.tumblewash.com/>.
- The City of Austin, in an effort to conserve water, is also offering a rebate to apartment and multifamily housing city water customers for water and energy efficient front-loading commercial clothes washers. Qualifying machines are

eligible for rebates of \$150. Click here for information:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/mfwasher.htm>

- In Canada, EnerGuide: offers information on the energy efficiency of major appliances and room air conditioners available on today's market; administers the EnerGuide label for appliances; and is responsible for administering minimum energy performance levels as set out in Canada's *Energy Efficiency Regulations*. Visit the EnerGuide website at:
<http://energguide.nrcan.gc.ca/default.cfm?PageID=1&Lang=e&Fiptop=hg&Header=hg> The website also provides an innovative long-term "Interactive Energy Cost Calculator" at
<http://energguide.nrcan.gc.ca/default.cfm?PageID=46&Lang=e&Fiptop=lg&Header=lg&Leftcol=main2> This tool can be used by consumers to calculate the long-term costs of purchasing a specific appliance. The calculator includes area-specific electricity rate information.
- The EnerGuide Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Energy Efficiency Rating System provides consumers with information on energy-efficient home heating and air-conditioning equipment.
http://hvac.nrcan.gc.ca/index_e.htm

d. Political Feasibility: The Energy STAR program is already in effect. Utilizing the marketing potential of this program should therefore be politically feasible. No action by state legislatures or regulatory agencies would be required.

e) Costs and Benefits: According to NEEA, resource-efficient washers traditionally made up only 2-3% of the units sold each year. NEEA claims that market share of these machines increased from a few percentage points at the beginning of the WashWise program to over 12 percent after the first 18 months. Over the course of NEEA's program, approximately \$800,000 was spent on rebates. NEEA has said that consumer and dealer surveys have demonstrated acceptance of such machines by the market. NEEA also claims that, in the past, the lack of domestically produced machines posed a barrier for consumer purchases of efficient washers. Since WashWise began two years ago, several major manufacturers such as Frigidaire, Maytag, and Amana have introduced resource saving machines.

According to the TumbleWash website, national studies of energy efficient washers show that such machines can produce an average water savings of 36 percent and average energy savings of 60 percent.

Programs such WashWise and TumbleWash can address the market barriers faced by new technologies, and can help make resource-efficient washers available to consumers while at the same time inducing lasting changes in consumer behavior.

f) Interaction with other policies:

g) Quantifiable under SIPs: