

State of Ohio toll-free numbers and websites

Page 4

Ohio House of Representatives <i>www.house.state.oh.us</i> Legislative Information	800-282-0253	Aging, Department of <i>www.state.oh.us/age</i> Golden Buckeye Card Ombudsman/Elder Rights Unit	800-422-1976 800-282-1206
Insurance, Department of <i>www.ins.state.oh.us</i> Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program	800-686-1578	Attorney General <i>www.ag.state.oh.us</i> Consumer Protection Crime Victim Assistance Patient Abuse & Neglect Hotline	800-282-0515 800-582-CVSS 800-64-ABUSE
Job and Family Services, Department of <i>www.state.oh.us/odjfs</i> Veteran Services Division Unemployment Compensation Hotline	800-253-4060 877-644-6562	Consumers' Counsel, Office of the Ohio <i>www.state.oh.us/cons</i> Utility Consumer Complaints	877-742-5622
Motor Vehicles, Bureau of <i>www.state.oh.us/odps/division/bmv</i> General Information	800-589-TAGS	Development, Department of <i>www.odod.state.oh.us</i> General Information Business Advocacy Home Energy Assistance Hotline One Stop Business Permit Center Travel & Tourism	800-848-1300 800-345-OHIO 800-282-0880 800-248-4040 800-BUCKEYE
Public Safety, Department of <i>www.state.oh.us/odps</i> Highway Patrol Ohio Road Conditions State Highway Patrol DUI Hotline	877-7-PATROL 888-2OH-ROAD 800-GRAB-DUI	Education, Department of <i>www.ode.state.oh.us</i> Child Nutritional Services Information General Education Development Ohio Prevention Education Resources	800-808-MEAL 800-334-6679 800-788-7254
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio <i>www.puc.state.oh.us</i> General Information	800-686-PUCO	Environmental Protection Agency <i>www.epa.state.oh.us</i> E-Check Information	800-227-8378
Taxation, Department of <i>www.state.oh.us/tax</i> Form Requests Tax Questions	800-282-1782 800-282-1780		

State Representative
Kenny Yuko
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A Legislative Report from Rep. Kenny Yuko

Representing the 7th District of Ohio • Cities of Euclid, Richmond Heights, and Parts of Cleveland



Kenny Yuko
State Representative



Dear Constituents,

As winter approaches, the high price of natural gas is looming large. Home heating costs are likely to be significantly higher than last year, which is causing particular concern to those on limited incomes - including the elderly.

While predictions vary, officials warn that homeowners can expect to see, on average, a 50-percent increase in their bills this winter. Simply put, soaring energy costs are putting consumers in a bind and forcing them to make tough budgeting choices.

Enclosed in the newsletter are helpful tips to make your home more energy efficient and updates on what lawmakers are doing to help. We could all use some assistance in keeping heating costs down during the winter months.

As legislators, we need to find practical solutions that offer relief soon, and we must look to the future for renewable energy sources that will keep costs down over time.

With cold weather right around the corner, this newsletter is dedicated to helping you keep safe and warm in the wake of escalating heating costs. Conservation and efficiency are vital, as we all strive to control costs on our heating bills.

Lastly, please inform me of any issues I can address in our newly designed newsletters. I hope you find our Legislative Update educational and informative, and I invite you to share thoughts and ideas.

Sincerely,

Kenny Yuko
State Representative

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NOVEMBER 2005

Dear Constituents	1
Legislative Perspective	2
Energy Solutions	3
Toll-free numbers and websites	4

Please feel free to share your e-mail address with my office so we can keep you updated on what's new at the Statehouse.

Ohio heat assistance programs

Despite best efforts to curb heating costs, some Ohioans find it difficult to pay ever-increasing utility bills.

There is help for those who need it.

You may be able to cut your heating costs by participating in Ohio's Gas Choice Program. Contact the Consumers' Council toll-free at 1-877-742-5622 or www.pickocc.org for more information.

Last year, more than 257,000 lower-income Ohio households relied on help from Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), to assist them in paying heating bills through the winter. Contact the state HEAP office toll-free number: (800) 282-0880, or download an application at www.odod.state.oh.us.

A Percentage of Income Plan allows you, if qualified, to make gas and electric payments based on a percentage of household income.

The former Ohio Energy Credit Program (OEC) now provides a one-time cash payment or credit to qualified elderly or disabled individuals.

The Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) helps low-income homeowners and renters reduce energy consumption while increasing the comfort of their homes. For details, visit www.eere.energy.gov/weatherization. For assistance in the state of Ohio, call (614) 466-6797.

Drilling for oil in state parks, beneath Lake Erie is no 'quick fix'

A bill has been introduced in the Ohio Senate that would allow drilling for oil and natural gas in Ohio's most protected lands. The measure is also being discussed in the House of Representatives and is catching the attention of media outlets throughout the state.

This legislation would open up drilling in state parks and beneath the surface of Lake Erie, our most valuable natural resource. Currently, drilling on Ohio wildlife preserves and beneath the lake is not permitted.

Ohio's hikers, bikers, and boaters share valid concerns with environmental groups. To permit drilling in protected lands and beneath protected waters puts natural resources at risk. Building access roads across parks also hinders recreational activities.

Supporters of the proposal believe immediate drilling could curb gas and oil prices in Ohio. In reality, consumers should not expect to see



A proposed bill would permit drilling beneath the surface of scenic Lake Erie, pictured above. -Courtesy of the Ottawa County Visitor Bureau

a drop in costs for some time. Drilling is a long and complicated process, and Ohioans' gas bills will most certainly not be affected this winter. In addition, the amount of oil and natural gas extracted will not shift the national shortage, according to the Ohio Environmental Council.

We must carefully consider the implications of drilling for oil and natural gas in protected areas. The outcome is a gamble that could jeopardize the quality of Ohio's lakes and parks.

Tip of the Month How to get the most out of a tank of gas



Whether you drive an economy car or an SUV, there are plenty of ways to improve your gas mileage. Avoid aggressive driving and observe the speed limit. Speeding, fast acceleration, and hard braking wastes gas. Lighten your load by clearing your car of extra weight, and remove roof racks or carriers if not used frequently. Keep current with car maintenance—clean air filters can improve gas mileage by as much as 10%. Properly inflated and aligned tires will improve gas mileage by 3%. Using the wrong grade of oil can reduce mileage by 1% to 2%. For longer-term savings, consider a high-mileage vehicle for your next purchase.

-Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Energy

Legislature aims to lessen the home heating cost burden



Ohio consumers brace themselves for winter in preparation of much higher natural gas and heating oil prices. Here at the Statehouse, we aren't just standing by and waiting for this to happen. The House Public Utilities and Energy Committee has started hearings intended to develop ways to meet this challenge, both in the short and long term.

State government has already boosted the amount of money devoted to the Home Energy Assistance Program, or HEAP. Additional Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds have been designated to assist with funding for HEAP. There are other fiscally responsible ways to bulk up this program. The state will collect more taxes in the upcoming months, due to higher gas prices. House Democrats proposed using those additional dollars to assist senior citizens in need of the HEAP Program this winter. The proposal was tabled, largely along party lines.

Last year, more than 257,000 lower-income Ohio households relied on help from HEAP to assist them in paying heating bills through the winter. Another 133,000 obtained emergency help, either to reconnect their service or avoid disconnection. For more information on this program, call the state HEAP office number: (800) 282-0880, or download an application at <http://www.odod.state.oh.us>.

Longer term, Democrats have put forward a proposal to increase the amount of electricity in Ohio generated from renewable sources such as solar, wind and biomass. Less than 1 percent of Ohio's electricity currently is produced from renewable resources. Legislation now under review by the Public Utilities Committee could create a renewable energy standard for Ohio. The goal: increase the percentage of electricity generated from renewable sources to 20 percent by 2021.

Quick tips: Make minor adjustments in your home and save money



As winter approaches, Ohioans are thinking about the looming cost of keeping warm. Here are some steps you can take to maintain comfort while keeping costs down.

Weatherization and conservation don't need to break your bank.

New habits can help reduce energy consumption and keep heating bills down. Consider making these minor adjustments in your home:

Simple and inexpensive home improvements can shave hundreds of dollars off your winter heating bills:

- Listen for doors or windows that "whistle" on windy days and seal them – especially in the rooms where you spend the most time.
- Have your furnace inspected and serviced once during the season. Check the filter every month and change it if dirty.
- Consider installing a programmable thermostat that can automatically reduce the temperature at night and when you are away from home.
- Insulate your water heater tank, the first six feet of the hot water supply line, and hot water pipes or heating ducts in unheated areas such as crawlspaces and attics.
- Save water, fuel, and money by replacing leaking hot water faucets and adding low-flow devices.
- Insulate attics, outside walls, and crawlspaces.

- Clean ranges and ovens regularly. Pay particular attention to reflector pans under the burners.
- Clean your dryer's lint filter with every load to allow air to circulate freely and dry clothes faster.
- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable for your family (about 68 degrees Fahrenheit). It's cheaper to add clothes than degrees.
- Clean heating ducts and registers and keep them free of obstructions.
- Close off rooms that are unused for long periods of time (e.g., spare bedrooms). Keep vents closed and registers off until needed.
- Open blinds and drapes on sunny days to allow nature to heat your house. Close them at night to help keep heat in.
- Lower the temperate setting on gas water heaters to the "warm" setting (120 degrees Fahrenheit).