Home Energy Audits and Retrofits
Q&As
October 31, 2016

KEY MESSAGES:

- **We are helping families fight climate change and reduce their energy bills at the same time**
- **Rebate programs that help people do energy-saving home renos and retrofits work — people want to upgrade their homes, lower their bills and protect the environment**
- **As of today, around 37,000 additional homeowners can get an energy audit that tells them the best ways to save energy and they can get rebates typically in the range of $500 to $2,000 to help pay for those audits and retrofits**
- **Small changes can have a big impact — on your monthly bills and for our planet**
- **So we're fighting climate change by helping people make little changes that, over time, will add up to big greenhouse gas reductions**
- **People should call Enbridge or Union Gas right now to request an energy audit and learn how they can benefit**

FRENCH KEY MESSAGES:

- **Nous aidons les familles à lutter contre le changement climatique et, en même temps, à réduire leurs coûts en énergie.**
- **Les programmes de rabais qui aident les propriétaires de maison à faire des rénovations et des améliorations de l'efficacité énergétique sont efficaces. Les gens veulent rénover leur logement, réduire leurs coûts et protéger l'environnement.**
- **À partir d'aujourd'hui, environ trente-sept mille (37 000) propriétaires de logement de plus peuvent obtenir une vérification de leur consommation d'énergie qui leur indiquera les meilleurs moyens d'économiser de l'énergie, et ils pourront typiquement recevoir des rabais de cinq cents (500) à deux mille (2 000) dollars pour aider à payer ces améliorations.**
- **Des petits changements peuvent avoir un impact important sur vos factures mensuelles et pour notre planète.**

- **Nous luttons contre le changement climatique en aidant les gens à faire des petits changements qui, avec le temps, permettront des réductions appréciables des émissions de gaz à effet de serre.**

- **Les gens devraient appeler Enbridge ou Union Gas dès maintenant pour demander une vérification de leur consommation et savoir comment ils peuvent en bénéficier.**

Q. How does this home energy retrofit rebate program work?

A. As part of our Green Investment Fund, we're helping Union Gas Limited and Enbridge Gas Distribution expand their existing home energy audits and retrofit programs so that more households can lower their emissions and their bills.

Homeowners across Ontario can now contact Union Gas Limited or Enbridge Gas Distribution to learn more about these programs.

These programs will help around 37,000 additional homeowners conduct audits to identify energy-saving opportunities and then complete retrofits, such as replacing furnaces, water heaters and upgrading insulation.

The programs will be available to single-family homes across Ontario that are heated with natural gas, oil, propane and wood, including those homes served by natural gas utilities other than Union Gas Limited or Enbridge Gas Distribution.

These retrofits are part of a $100 million commitment from Ontario's Green Investment Fund.

Q. How much money do you expect this will save the average homeowner on their heating bill?

A. The rebates will help homeowners pay for the costs of the audits and retrofits—so they can save on the cost of construction or new equipment if they participate in the full programs. The typical range of the rebates provided by the programs is $500 to $2,000. After that, households will save on their energy bills year after year because they won't need to burn as much gas or fuel. Energy-efficiency home renos have been shown to save $1.50 to $4 for natural gas consumers for every dollar invested.

Q. Energy retrofits can be costly. How much of a rebate would people receive when replacing a furnace, for example?

A. No matter which incentive measures you choose to use, you will see a difference. Contact Union or Enbridge directly for more information about incentive levels and rebates.

To qualify for retrofit rebates through Enbridge, a homeowner must achieve a minimum 15 per cent gas or alternative fuel savings. The maximum incentives level, including audit rebates, is $2,100. For example, if you install basement insulation under Enbridge's program, you would receive $500 for 15%-24% fuel savings, $1,100 for 25%-49% fuel savings, or $1,600 for 50% or higher fuel savings.

With Union Gas, homeowners are paid for each measure installed up to a maximum of $5,000, including audit rebates. This includes a bonus for homeowners who install more than two measures. For example, if you install basement insulation under Union's program, you would receive a rebate in the range of $500 to $1,250.

Q. Why are you taking this approach and not focusing on direct reductions to people's electricity bills?

A. The $100 million GIF investment is part of Ontario's Climate Change Strategy and is intended to help homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their homes, reduce their energy bills and cut greenhouse gas emissions. The programs will be available to homes across Ontario that are heated with natural gas, oil, propane and wood.

Funding will reward real, measureable actions by homeowners to reduce their carbon footprint, like replacing furnaces and water heaters and upgrading insulation. Homeowners will also conserve energy and save money on their energy bills.

The investment is expected to enable additional audits and retrofits of around 37,000 additional homes and save approximately 1.6 Megatonnes of cumulative lifetime greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to the province's GHG emissions reduction targets.

Q. How many homeowners do you anticipate taking part in the rebate programs?

A. These enhanced programs will help around 37,000 additional homeowners conduct audits to identify energy-saving opportunities and then complete retrofits, such as replacing furnaces, water heaters and upgrading insulation.

The programs will be available to single-family homes across Ontario that are heated with natural gas, oil, propane and wood, including those homes served by natural gas utilities other than Union Gas Limited or Enbridge Gas Distribution.

Q. How is this different from existing home energy audits and retrofit programs offered by Union Gas Limited and Enbridge Gas Distribution?

A. The existing home energy audits and retrofit programs offered by Union Gas Limited and Enbridge Gas Distribution are only available to Enbridge's and Union's customers (ie. to natural gas customers served by Enbridge and Union).

The government's GIF investment is being used to enhance the availability of these existing home energy audit and retrofit programs so that they will now be available to homes that are heated with natural gas, oil, propane and wood, including those homes served by natural gas utilities other than Union Gas Limited or Enbridge Gas Distribution.

The investment will help around 37,000 additional homeowners have certified home energy audits conducted to identify energy-saving opportunities for their homes and then it will help those people complete retrofits by providing rebates.

Q. What is the cost of the program to the government?

A. The province is investing $100 million from the Ontario Green Investment Fund (GIF) to help homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their homes, reduce their energy bills and cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Ontario's Green Investment Fund is a $325-million down payment on the province's cap and trade program to strengthen the economy, create jobs and reduce these environmentally harmful emissions.

Cap and trade proceeds are being reinvested in programs exactly like this to help people lower their emissions and literally insulate themselves from what we know will be the rising price of polluting energy sources.

The world is increasing its efforts in the fight against climate change. Ontario needs to be prepared in every way, and that includes making our homes more efficient.

Q. How does this fit into the government's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

A. Energy audits and retrofit programs reward real, measureable actions people can take to reduce their carbon footprint.

Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan calls for cutting greenhouse gas pollution to 15 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, 37 per cent by 2030 and 80 per cent by 2050. The government will report on the plan's implementation annually and renew the plan every five years.

This investment in particular is expected to cut greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 1.6 Megatonnes.

Q. Why are Enbridge Gas Distribution and Union Gas Limited administering these programs?

A. Enbridge Gas Distribution and Union Gas have a successful track record of offering home energy audits and retrofit programs. In 2014, Enbridge Gas Distribution and Union Gas Limited residential energy efficiency programs resulted in about a 500,000 tonne reduction in cumulative lifetime greenhouse gas emissions.

These enhanced programs will leverage and build upon those existing programs, and make them available to more homes across Ontario, including those that are heated with natural gas, oil, propane and wood, and those that are served by natural gas utilities other than Union Gas Limited or Enbridge Gas Distribution.

Q. Are other types of buildings, such as apartment buildings and office towers, eligible under these retrofit programs?

A. No. There are other programs and plans in place for office and apartment buildings.

To date, Ontario has reduced energy use in larger buildings through conservation programs, stricter requirements in the Building Code, product efficiency regulations, greening electricity and improved access to energy information for consumers.

Ontario is building on progress made. The province will continue to reduce greenhouse gas pollution in existing housing and other buildings, and ensure new buildings do not contribute to increased net greenhouse gas pollution.

To achieve the 2016 budget commitment, Ontario intends to invest in initiatives that both reduce greenhouse gas pollution and ensure that the net impact of cap and trade would not result in an overall increase in electricity costs for commercial and industrial consumers.

Actions in this part of the plan are designed to help the buildings sector continue to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. They include actions to improve efficiency in multi-residential buildings and public institutions; to establish long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets in the Building Code and introduce low-carbon content requirements for natural gas; and to support workforce training.

Q. 37,000 is a fraction of the homes in Ontario. What happens if 500,000 people apply?

A. The $100 million investment from the Green Investment Fund will enhance the existing home audits and retrofit programs offered by Enbridge and Union to target approximately 37,000 additional homes that use greenhouse gas emitting fuels for primary heating.

Homeowners across the province who heat their homes with natural gas and other fuels, such as oil, propane and wood, will have access to the program, allowing these homeowners to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, save money on their energy bills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The $100M investment will support the enhanced home energy audits and retrofit programs over the course of about three years, or until the funds are exhausted.

Q. How many people are utilizing these programs prior to today's announcement?

A. The $100M investment from the Green Investment Fund enhances the existing home audits and retrofit programs offered by Enbridge and Union. Prior to the $100M investment, the existing programs were only available to Enbridge Gas Distribution or Union Gas Limited customers.

From 2012 to 2015, about 12,700 Enbridge customers accessed Enbridge's existing program and about 3,800 Union customers accessed Union's existing program.

The investment is expected to enable audits and retrofits of around 37,000 additional homes. The enhanced programs will be available to single-family homes across Ontario that are heated with natural gas, oil, propane and wood, including those homes served by natural gas utilities other than Union Gas Limited or Enbridge Gas Distribution.

Q. If these programs already exist and 37,000 households did not participate last year, how can you expect to increase uptake? How will these programs be advertised so people know about them?

A. The $100M investment from the Green Investment Fund enhances the existing home audits and retrofit programs offered by Enbridge and Union. Prior to the $100M investment, the existing programs were only available to Enbridge Gas Distribution or Union Gas Limited.

The investment is expected to enable additional audits and retrofits of around 37,000 additional homes. The enhanced programs will be available to single-family homes across Ontario that are heated with natural gas, oil, propane and wood, including those homes served by natural gas utilities other than Union Gas Limited or Enbridge Gas Distribution.

Enbridge and Union are advertising the enhanced programs through a variety of channels, including updates to their websites, digital banners, radio ads and flyers to ensure that homeowners know about the programs.

Q. Given consumer concerns about electricity prices, why isn't this program open to those with electric heat?

A. The investment is expected to enable audits and retrofits of around 37,000 additional homes and save approximately 1.6 Megatonnes of cumulative lifetime greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to the province's GHG emissions reduction targets. Homeowners who heat their homes primarily using electricity, for example those who have baseboard heating, can access Save On Energy rebates and incentives delivered by their local electricity utility with support from the Independent Electricity System Operator.

- Save On Energy coupons are available in stores for one month in the spring and fall, and can be downloaded year-round to use at participating retailers to help Ontarians save on a wide range of energy-efficient products including LED light bulbs, power bars with integrated timers or auto-shutoff, baseboard programmable thermostats and more.

- For customers with an electric forced air furnace, the Save On Energy Heating and Cooling Initiative provides rebates to help offset the cost of purchasing and installing new heating and cooling equipment in the home, such as a high-efficiency furnace with an electronically commutated motor (ECM), or an ENERGY STAR certified central air conditioner.

- For qualified low-income customers, the Home Assistance Program provides a range of measures at no cost to improve the energy efficiency and comfort of your home, ranging from simple measures like faucet aerators and LEDs to possible replacement of refrigerators and window air conditioners.

- New pilot programs and program enhancements are being rolled out to expand customer offerings. For example, Hydro One and Enwin Utilities are piloting programs to help customers with electric space or water heating to take advantage of new heat pump technologies to reduce their electricity consumption. Air source heat pumps can reduce space heating costs by up to 50 per cent.

- A province-wide whole home pilot program is currently being designed by the Independent Electricity System Operator, in collaboration with natural gas and electricity utilities, which will also build on the existing home energy audits and retrofit programs to offer incentives for electricity saving measures.

Q. What are the energy cost increases expected from cap and trade for gas, gasoline and electricity?

A. Based on the current forecast for the price of carbon, the pump price of a litre of gasoline would increase 4.3 cents and the cost of an average monthly natural gas bill would rise by about $5 as a result of cap and trade.

These price increases are very small compared to the larger decreases that have occurred as a result of lower global prices for oil and natural gas. Ontario gasoline pump prices in January 2016 were, on average, 34.4 cents per litre lower than in 2014. Likewise, average natural gas prices in Ontario in January 2016 were 7.7 cents per cubic metre below where they had been in 2014.

The recent Speech from the Throne included measures to offset the impact of cap and trade on electricity consumers, including an 8% rebate for homes, small businesses and farms, and the use of cap and trade proceeds to keep commercial and industrial bills affordable.

Q. How does this program offset those future costs?

The Green Investment Fund helps fund incremental natural gas conservation programs beyond what Ontario's natural gas distributors had previously received funding approval from the Ontario Energy Board to deliver.

By conserving natural gas use — through more efficient appliances, home heating systems and innovative / smart thermostats — customers see a reduction in commodity / consumption costs. Technically, the per unit cost of each natural gas cubic meter will still rise, but if homeowners use less gas, then their overall bills can be mitigated, or in some cases reduced.

Q. What is everyone else supposed to do?

A. In addition to the down payment provided through the Green Investment Fund, the government released a Climate Change Action Plan earlier this summer outlining where it would be investing proceeds from cap and trade. Actions in the plan will provide Ontarians with the opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the gasoline and natural gas cost increases from a price on carbon include support for the adoption of electric vehicles and a new organization to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with a planned investment of over one billion that will provide incentives for home retrofits.