

PSC Reform Act Would Cut \$7 Million from Focus on Energy Program

Written by Clean Wisconsin
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Assembly committee hearing Wednesday on AB 804/SB 654 to cut money-saving program could result in businesses and homeowners paying an additional \$60 million on their energy bills.

MADISON - A bill under consideration in the Assembly would result in higher energy bills for businesses and homeowners by reducing the amount electric utilities pay into Focus on Energy, the state's energy efficiency and renewable energy program, by \$7 million.

The Assembly Energy and Utilities Committee held the hearing on Assembly Bill 804/Senate Bill 654, dubbed the PSC Reform Act, Wednesday.

"Each year, this proposed legislation to cut Focus on Energy's budget will result in businesses and homeowners paying an additional \$60 million on their energy bills," says Keith Reopelle, senior policy director for Clean Wisconsin. "With the energy bill savings, economic stimulus and jobs that the program creates, we should be investing more in Focus on Energy, not considering a cut to it."

Focus on Energy is a public program that provides Wisconsin residents and businesses with resources, incentives and support to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. This program directly assists almost 200,000 Wisconsin residents and businesses per year, but also saves all Wisconsin ratepayers money by holding the line on costly new energy generation.

In addition, Focus on Energy generates \$3 in energy savings for each \$1 invested and to date, the program has created 24,000 jobs and generated almost \$2 billion in sales for Wisconsin businesses, including manufacturers of high-efficiency lighting, appliances and motors as well as wind turbine and solar panel parts. Companies that install energy efficiency controls and equipment for homes and businesses also benefit.

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The program has also helped offset more than two gas power plants' worth of electricity demand; by comparison, Wisconsin sends \$12 billion out of state each year to import fossil fuels.

"Let's stop exporting all those dollars for coal and natural gas and keep that money at home," says **Steve Johnson**, vice president of business development for Convergence Energy LLC, a Fontana, Wis.-based business that provides solar energy products. "By supporting distributed solar energy and energy efficiency, Focus on Energy is doing just that, keeping our hard-earned money with businesses in Wisconsin, not the fossil fuel industry in other states."

Add Reopelle: "Instead of holding a hearing today on cutting funding for the program, the state Legislature should be looking at ways to support and expand Focus on Energy to reap all the benefits the program has to offer."

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*On behalf of its more than 30,000 members, supporters and its coalition partners, Clean Wisconsin protects Wisconsin's air, water and natural heritage.
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