



# Northern Alaska Environmental Center

*Conservation's Northern Voice*

November 6, 2007

## **Immediate measures to help Alaskan communities adapt to global warming Immediate Issues Group**

Global warming's impacts are coincident with a high cost of energy. Energy will become ever more expensive and any measures undertaken to assuage the present needs of Alaska's communities should certainly ask, "What then?" The answer to that question will determine how Alaska's communities fare in an uncertain world.

As you prepare Alaskan communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change, an important corollary is preparing them to use energy more efficiently. Because energy use is among the broadest of social issues, it will take government leadership to make the 'structural changes' in law and policy that encourage efficient use of energy.

For Alaskan consumers, energy cost = use x price. Using less energy – at any price, but especially at present prices – necessarily reduces the cost to consumers. Lowering the operating costs for Alaska families and communities increases their sustainability.

When energy efficiency becomes a matter of public policy and lending practices, you will see CO2 emission reductions coincide with a lower cost of energy to Alaskans.

We recommend putting lenders and lending agencies at the center of a strategy to prepare Alaskans to successfully adapt to an uncertain future. Enable more Alaskans to qualify for enhanced energy efficiency/conservation upgrades or retrofit grants and low interest loans.\*

1. Increase funding for Low Income Weatherization program. In 2007, Interior Weatherization aims to serve 127 households, or four-tenths of one percent of the Borough's 29,777 households. <http://www.fedstats.gov/qf/states/02/02090.html>
2. Extend AHFC's Energy Efficiency Interest Rate Reduction package to Borough residents, increase the allowable loan, and make available more funds for the program.
3. Extend AHFC'S Small Building Material Loan to Fairbanks residents, extend these loans to non-owner occupied buildings, and increase loan limits.
4. Establish loan program to encourage renewable energy installations in households and businesses (AHFC or other).

\* Demand for conservation/efficiency measures in new and existing buildings has lagged; supply of conservation/efficiency incentives exist but appear neither coordinated nor attractive enough. Despite numerous programs, most commercial and residential buildings are dangerously inefficient.