



Powerful Connections

January 2010

 Citizens Electric Corporation
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

Climate change legislation: what we want vs. what we can afford



Van Robinson, CEO

Have you been following the debate on climate change legislation in Congress? If you're like most Americans, the answer is probably "a little" or "not at all."

Most of us lead very busy lives due to work, church, family, hobbies, and such. At the end of a long day, I'm more inclined to turn on ESPN for sports rather than watch a political debate on CSPAN. Can you relate? It's not that I don't care about what's going on in Washington DC, I'm probably just tired and not sure if it pertains to me. I think many of us tend to tune out politics when we're not in an election year or when we think that proposed legislation won't impact us.

Climate change legislation will impact all of us! If you drive a vehicle that burns gasoline or diesel, you will be impacted. If you burn natural gas or propane to heat your home, you will be impacted. If you buy your electricity from an organization that burns coal, natural gas, and petroleum coke (which you do), you will be impacted. That's because all of those energy sources emit carbon and other greenhouse gases (GHG).

How will climate change legislation impact us? The US Senate is debating that very topic right now and is expected to vote this spring. Generally speaking, you're going to pay more if you buy goods and services that are related to GHG emissions. Here's an example of how it may work in the electric industry. The federal government will allocate a certain number of "GHG emission allowances" to Citizens Electric. If our power supplier's GHG emissions are greater than those allowances, we will be left with some tough choices.

1. We could buy more allowances, but they could be expensive and we've done nothing to reduce our emissions.
2. We could build nuclear generation or more wind generation to replace our carbon-fueled resources. While that would reduce our emissions, it may be extremely expensive and, in the case of wind, unreliable.

Many people want to debate whether GHG emissions have contributed to climate change. Since I'm not a scientist, it's hard for me to say who is right in this debate. Neither side seems to have a bullet-proof argument. In my opinion, the debate should focus on what we want versus what we can afford. We're faced with these choices every day. We may want the steak dinner, but we can afford a hamburger. We may want the new car, but we can afford a used car. Some may want carbon-free electric generation, but we can afford generation fueled by coal and natural gas.

Like many rural areas, this part of Missouri has had to deal with some tough economic times recently. We all want a stable climate and a clean environment, but there is some limit to our financial resources. If you're concerned about the affordability of this legislation as I am, I encourage you to contact Senator Bond at (573) 334-7044 and Senator McCaskill at (573) 651-0964. If you have computer access, you can also email them by going to www.ourenergy.coop. We can't wait until these costs end up on our electric bills. We must act now to find a solution that balances what we want with what we can afford.

CEC Offices will be closed on January 1, 2010, for the New Year's Holiday.

For electrical emergencies, call 1-800-286-2251.

HAVE A SAFE AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR!





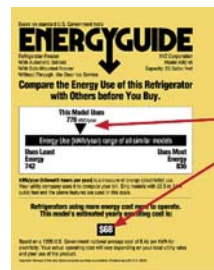
Service Awards Presented

Employees who reached milestone anniversaries in 2009 were recently recognized for their years of service. This group represents more than a total of 275 years of experience with Citizens Electric.

Front row: (left to right) Dana Kertz, 25 years; Mary Stuppy, 30 years; Van Robinson, 5 years; John Trapp, 30 years; and Mike Grass, 30 years. Second row: Brian Hahn, 30 years; Mike Reitzel, 30 years; Chris Burger, 15 years; and Carl Miller, 20 years. Back row: Mike Engert, 10 years; Delvin Lukefahr, 5 years; and John Winters, 30 years. Not pictured is Tim Holland with 15 years of service.

Energy Guide vs. Energy Star

If there's a yellow Energy Guide sticker on an appliance, does that mean it's an Energy Star qualified appliance? **No.** The Federal Trade Commission requires that all refrigerators, freezers, water heaters, washing machines, dishwashers and window air conditioners be labeled with an **Energy Guide Label**.



The U. S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have developed a program called **ENERGY STAR** which labels only those appliances meeting strict energy efficient criteria. **ENERGY STAR** qualified appliances incorporate advanced technologies that use 10–50 percent less energy and water than standard models. Always look for the ENERGY STAR label when purchasing appliances.

Energy Tip of the Month

Does your water heater need a jacket?

Next to heating and cooling, water heating may be the second largest electric user in your home. According to ENERGY STAR, the average household spends \$400-\$600 per year on water heating. An insulating jacket for your electric water heater can reduce losses by 25-40 percent.

If the sides of the water heater tank feel warm to the touch, or if the tank is located in an unheated area, you probably need a water heater jacket. Check your system's manual to see if an insulating jacket or blanket can be used on that model.

The cost of water heater jackets can vary significantly, starting at around \$10. Look for the insulating quality and select one that is R-8 or higher.

You can probably install an insulating pre-cut jacket or blanket on your electric water heater tank yourself. Follow the directions carefully and leave the thermostat access panel uncovered. Don't set the thermostat above 130 degrees on the electric water heater with an insulating jacket, or the wiring may overheat.

Reducing your water temperature to 120°F reduces your energy costs and slows mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes. This helps your water heater last longer and operate at its maximum efficiency.

Water heaters typically last about 10-15 years. If your water heater is more than ten years old, you may want to consider replacing it with an ENERGY STAR qualified model before it fails. Depending on the technology you choose, you can cut your water heating costs in half.



**URNS OUT, MONEY BURNS
WHEN MY WATER HEATER
IS SET ABOVE 120 DEGREES.**

I didn't even know there was a dial. Now, I'm saving \$73 a year by turning my water heater down to 120°.

What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at TogetherWeSave.com.