



High Energy Costs

High energy costs, particularly affecting the Northeast, impact household budgets. On average, New Yorkers spend \$1,724 annually on energy per household. Reducing this figure creates more household disposable income which, in turn, spurs economic growth. New York State imports 85 percent of the energy it consumes. Reducing this figure through increased energy efficiency will lead the state toward a more secure energy future with a decreased dependence on imported energy, protection of environmental resources, and increased economic development and job growth.

Energy Efficient Information consists of free information sheets for consumers on ENERGY STAR labels, methods to reduce home heating costs, correctly sizing room air conditioners, and energy efficient apartments. There are also series on appliances and lighting, energy deregulation, indoor air quality, insulation and air sealing, heating systems, solar energy, water heating, and energy efficient windows. They are the result of a partnership between Cornell Cooperative Extension and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to educate New Yorkers about ways to reduce energy expenses in the home.

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Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors

An estimated 211,000 new invasive cases of breast cancer were expected to occur among women in the United States during 2005. It was estimated that 1,690 men will be diagnosed. The lifetime risk of occurrence is 1 in 8. Cornell University's *Program on Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors* (BCERF) conducts research and provides education related to this disease to individuals, educators, and health care providers. Its goal is to further the understanding of the role that environmental risk factors may play in breast cancer.

Fact sheets address internal factors such as body weight, alcohol, exercise, fruits and vegetables, and hormones; external factors such as smoking, household products, pesticides, and workplace exposures; and life course factors such as childhood events and family history. Learning resources, events and conferences, and research are available on the BCERF web site. Faculty in the Division of Nutritional Sciences play a major role in outreach through Cornell Cooperative Extension and other venues. They also contribute their expertise on the role of eating, exercise, and obesity in breast cancer.

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CUergo

CUergo is a Cornell University ergonomics web site that focuses on ways to improve comfort, performance, and health through the ergonomic design of products and environments. Many people spend large amounts of time using computers. Changes in workstation design and equipment can assist in reduced problems with backs, shoulders, necks, eyes, upper arms and forearms, elbows, hands, and feet. Consumers can benefit from information to diminish or prevent musculoskeletal injuries. Of even greater importance is guidance for children using computers, since most workstations are built on an adult scale and lifetime use by children will be even longer than contemporary adults.

Resources on *CUergo* include workstation guidelines on arranging both adult and children's workstations, tips for laptops and computer mice, and selecting ergonomic chairs. Guidelines for

ergonomic products include considerations for left-handed people, back care issues, and mattress selection. The site also contains a variety of related information such as ergonomics research in Human Ecology and graduate thesis presentations.

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Water Quality

People's homes and properties are vulnerable to pollutants that can threaten their health and harm the environment. These hazards include toxic household products, poorly maintained septic systems, improperly stored fuels and chemicals, heating and cooling systems in poor working order, and inefficient storm water management. Beyond this are the concerns that are sometimes raised about manufacturing and agricultural industries.

The *Water Quality* resources available online address several important components of this topic. *Home*A*Syst* helps people evaluate their home and property for pollution risks and health hazards. *Septic System Maintenance* educates homeowners about the proper care and maintenance of their septic systems. *Water Testing and Treatment* fact sheets help consumers to identify specific water quality problems, maintain a private water supply, and/or make knowledgeable decisions for purchasing home water treatment devices. *Household Hazardous Products* educates consumers about the proper use, storage, and safe disposal of household cleaning products and other potentially hazardous chemicals.

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Building a Balance: Housing Affordability, Environmental Protection, and Smart Land Use Decisions

In some areas of New York State population is increasing, while in others it is stable or even declining. Nonetheless, negative impact of sprawl is affecting areas throughout the state. Many local government leaders strive to examine policies that focus on land use patterns, as well as mechanisms for preserving open space and achieving goals related to environmental protection and housing affordability.

Building a Balance: Housing Affordability, Environmental Protection, and Smart Land Use Decisions is the result of research at Cornell University that identified processes and tools that have informed a program to guide communities through development decisions in ways that facilitate open discussion without polarizing disputes among various interest groups. These fact sheets are available on the Building a Balance web page at the Community and Economic Development Toolbox.

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