

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0505

Help Your Constituents Lower their Energy Bills Help the Earth Lower its Temperature

Celebrate Earth Day by Supporting the Energy Conservation through Trees Act

April 23, 2008

Dear Colleague,

As we recognize Earth Day this week, energy consumption is a topic on the minds of many. Reducing the amount of energy that we need to live our lives is a proven and successful way to help reduce global warming emissions and to save money. With this in mind, I encourage you to co-sponsor the *Energy Conservation through Trees Act*.

In neighborhoods across our country, families are struggling to pay for the energy that heats and cools their homes. Generating the power to run heaters and air conditioners, however, requires utilities and other residential power providers to buy expensive—and often dirty—power during peak times of the day.

Fortunately, strategically-planted trees represent one solution to this problem, and will help our constituents afford to keep their homes at a comfortable temperature without running heaters and air conditioners full-blast during the day. When fully-grown, properly placed and planted trees can cut home cooling costs by up to 40 percent. Trees planted in a strategic way around homes also help reduce the urban heat island effect, clean the air that we breathe, and increase local property values.

For years, the electric utility in my hometown of Sacramento has partnered with a local non-profit tree-planting organization to operate a highly successful tree-planting program. The benefits to my constituents and to the environment in which they live have been substantial and tangible. The program has:

- Eliminated the need for 30,000 air conditioners in the Sacramento region;
- Saved enough electricity to power about 14,000 homes;
- Sequestered approximately 22 million pounds of carbon dioxide;
- Saved Sacramento's ratepayers approximately \$1.4 million annually in energy costs.

The *Energy Conservation through Trees Act* builds upon this successful model to create a grant program within the Department of Energy to finance similar tree-planting programs nationwide. In order to qualify for financing, utilities must work with local tree-planting partners, utilize science-based tree-siting guidelines, and plant the right trees in the right places to reduce energy consumption and lower energy bills for American consumers.

Please join me in supporting this commonsense legislation that expands a proven local solution to the Federal level. To co-sponsor this bill, or if you would like further information, please contact Sam Stefanki of my staff at sam.stefanki@mail.house.gov or at (202) 225-7163.

Sincerely,



DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress