

PENNIES FOR POWER

The Quiet Work of Keeping New England Efficient



Most people only think about their utility when something goes wrong. They rarely think about the teams working behind the scenes to help them use less energy and spend less money doing it. Across New England, those teams have quietly built some of the most effective energy efficiency programs in the country and they are not limited to one company or one state.

It is easy to overlook the people behind a rebate check or a home energy audit. But those are real teams doing real work in every corner of this region and the results, billions of dollars in savings and millions of tons of avoided emissions, speak for themselves.

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“The future belongs to those who show up for it.”

NORTHEASTREC.ORG

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

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Eversource, National Grid, Unitil, Avangrid and PPL, Energy Efficiency Teams across New England

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In Massachusetts, Eversource and National Grid are two of the utilities behind Mass Save, the statewide energy efficiency and electrification initiative that also includes Berkshire Gas, Cape Light Compact, Liberty and Unitil. Together these teams offer home energy assessments, equipment rebates, low cost financing and contractor training that help residents and businesses across the Commonwealth cut their energy use. According to the program's most recent impact report, Mass Save solutions have generated more than 3.6 billion dollars in total benefits and avoided nearly 4 million lifetime metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. For 2026, the whole home heat pump rebate through Mass Save sits at 8,500 dollars and the program also offers a 0 percent HEAT Loan to help spread out the cost of major efficiency upgrades.

Unitil's reach extends well beyond Massachusetts. With operations across Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, Unitil's efficiency teams participate in all three of the region's major efficiency collaboratives, Mass Save, NHSaves and Efficiency Maine, giving customers in each state access to rebates, energy assessments and no interest financing for upgrades like insulation, duct sealing and heating system replacements.

In Connecticut, the efficiency work runs through Energize Connecticut, a statewide initiative jointly administered by Eversource and Avangrid's Connecticut subsidiaries, United Illuminating, Connecticut Natural Gas and Southern Connecticut Gas. United Illuminating's teams run the state's Home Energy Solutions program, a 50 dollar in-home energy audit that on average delivers about 1,000 dollars in efficiency services and installs, along with rebates of up to 15,000 dollars for air source and geothermal heat pumps. Avangrid's reach extends into Maine as well through Central Maine Power, the state's largest electric utility, which connects customers to Efficiency Maine's statewide rebate and financing programs.

In Rhode Island, PPL's subsidiary Rhode Island Energy administers the state's energy efficiency programs, connecting residents and businesses to home energy assessments, heat pump incentives and weatherization support as part of Rhode Island's broader push toward its clean energy goals.

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None of this has happened without real growing pains. As efficiency program budgets have grown to meet rising demand, several of these programs, Mass Save chief among them, have become part of a broader statewide conversation about energy affordability. That conversation is a fair and important one for each of these states to keep having. What does not get talked about enough is the work happening underneath that debate, the assessors going into homes, the program administrators processing rebates and the teams at utilities across all six New England states who show up every day trying to make the switch to efficient, electric heating and cooling a little easier and a little more affordable for the next household in line.

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COMPANY SPOTLIGHT

Rhode Island Energy

The Utility Making Sure the Lights Actually Stay On

There is a version of the clean energy story that gets told a lot. Solar panels going up, wind turbines spinning, big numbers about megawatts. What gets told less often is the unglamorous work happening underground and inside substations that makes all of it actually reach people's homes. That is where Rhode Island Energy has been quietly putting in the hours.

New smart switch technology the utility installed has already detected three separate outage events and automatically rerouted power before most customers even noticed anything had happened. Nearly 5,000 households kept their lights on, restored in about a minute each time, with no crew needing to be dispatched. Michele Leone, Rhode Island Energy's Chief Operating Officer, put it simply. Our customers depend on reliable service every day and we're focused on delivering exactly that.

That kind of reliability does not happen by accident. Rhode Island Energy has been steadily modernizing its grid, technology and all, so the state's electric system can keep pace with a state that is racing toward its goal of 100 percent renewable electricity. Rhode Island Energy also administers the state's Renewable Energy Growth Program, the engine behind hundreds of megawatts of new solar and wind coming online across the state. Its predecessor utility played a central role in interconnecting the nation's first offshore wind farm at Block Island back when almost no one in the country believed offshore wind was possible here.

It is easy to get excited about a new solar array or a wind farm ribbon cutting. It is harder to get excited about a smart switch buried in a substation. But when your power stays on during a storm because of that switch, it starts to feel like the most exciting thing in the world. Rhode Island Energy is proof that the unglamorous work is often the work that matters most.



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NextEra Energy's \$67 Billion Bid for Dominion Energy Would Reshape Nuclear Power in New England

NextEra Energy, owner of New Hampshire's Seabrook Nuclear Power Station, has announced plans to acquire Dominion Energy, owner of Connecticut's Millstone Nuclear Power Station, in a deal worth nearly 67 billion dollars. If approved, the merger would put every nuclear plant in New England under one company's control. Together those plants supply roughly a quarter of the region's electricity and half of its carbon free power.

ctmirror.org



Massachusetts Senate Preserves Energy Efficiency Funding in New Energy Bill

The Massachusetts Senate unveiled a wide ranging energy bill that rejects the House's earlier proposal to cut a billion dollars from the state's Mass Save efficiency program. The Senate version takes a closer look at less obvious cost drivers behind rising electricity bills rather than pursuing a single large cut to a program that has returned billions of dollars in benefits to residents.

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Connecticut's New Solar Law Extends Incentives and Authorizes Plug In Solar

Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont signed a new solar law that extends the state's residential, commercial and community solar incentive programs beyond their previous expiration date. The law also authorizes plug in solar systems for the first time and directs regulators to design successor incentive programs beginning in 2028, giving the state's solar industry a clearer path forward.

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Sunlight and Batteries Reshape Power on a Remote Maine Island

Matinicus Island, more than 20 miles off the Maine coast and too far out to connect to the mainland grid, replaced its aging diesel power system with a 160 kilowatt solar array, new diesel generators and battery storage. The upgrade, funded in part by a USDA Rural Energy for America Program grant of more than 350,000 dollars, means the diesel engines now run just a couple of hours a day and burn a fraction of the fuel the old system used.

islandinstitute.org

“AS THE SAYING GOES, THE STONE AGE DID NOT END BECAUSE WE RAN OUT OF STONES; WE TRANSITIONED TO BETTER SOLUTIONS. THE SAME OPPORTUNITY LIES BEFORE US WITH ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLEAN ENERGY.”

– STEVEN CHU