

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

March 29, 2017

# **Albertans overpaying on utility bills**

**CALGARY** — A new study shows Albertans are paying between \$4 billion and \$13 billion extra on their electricity bills because of a lack of serious energy efficiency programs in the past. While the government is currently putting new energy efficiency programs in place, the report notes that these efforts are not enough to ensure Albertans won't be overpaying in the future.

“Nearly all provinces and states in Canada and the U.S. integrate energy efficiency programs into their utility system,” said Jesse Row, Executive Director of the Alberta Energy Efficiency Alliance. “This allows them to reduce utility costs for consumers by automatically helping consumers save energy when it’s cheaper than building new infrastructure.”

The study shows that provinces and states typically save between 0.4 per cent and 1.5 per cent of their electricity every year, and between 0.4 per cent and 0.75 per cent of their natural gas through energy efficiency programs. These savings are above and beyond efficiency improvements that occur without programs in place. It concludes that if Alberta had done the same since it closed its Energy Efficiency Branch in the early 1990s, electricity consumption could be 21 per cent lower than it is currently.

“Saving a small amount every year adds up to big savings over the long run,” adds Row. “But to maximize savings, energy efficiency needs to be thought of as an alternative to building new supply infrastructure.”

To do that effectively, the utility regulator and the electric system operator need to have energy efficiency in their mandate.

“A good example of the missed opportunity were the decisions to build \$13 billion of transmission lines in the province,” states Row. “A simple analysis ahead of time would have shown, as it has in other provinces and states, that it’s cheaper to help consumers save energy than it is to invest 100 per cent of your money into new supply infrastructure.”

The recent report from the province’s Energy Efficiency Advisory Panel also included a recommendation to create an energy efficiency mandate for Alberta’s utility regulator and electric system operator.

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*The study can be found at [www.aeea.ca/pdf/better-way-to-manage-utility-costs.pdf](http://www.aeea.ca/pdf/better-way-to-manage-utility-costs.pdf)*

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