



## Perks pile up for oil-to-gas conversions

July 30, 2012 - Green Buildings

Converting from heating oil to natural gas offers plenty of benefits for home-owners and property owners. Natural gas is less damaging to humans and the environment, it lowers our country's dependency on foreign sources, and incentives are making it more affordable than ever to make the switch.

Burning heating fuel accounts for 14% of fine particulate matter pollutants in the air, which may not sound like much, but it releases more pollutants than vehicles and power plants. Heating oil produces carbon dioxide, a lead trigger for climate change and acid rain. These pollutants can damage human organs and lower life expectancy as well.

Converting just one home to gas lowers the amount of carbon dioxide released by about 40% and decreases sulfur dioxide emissions by about 99.9%—the equivalent of taking six cars off the street for a year. It also eradicates the need to inspect aboveground and underground storage tanks along with costly liabilities that come when tanks leak. In converting to natural gas, property owners can also bolster their property values.

Changing to natural gas lowers the United States' dependency on foreign energy sources. About 97% of natural gas comes from North America, but the Northeast alone continues to rely on foreign oil for about 90% of its energy needs. In using natural gas, we can diminish our petroleum product consumption tremendously. Plus, new HVAC equipment is more efficient, so it requires less energy and offers impressive energy cost savings.

Governments across the state realize how important it is to turn to cleaner, more affordable sources of energy. Starting on October 1, 2012, New York City will be capping the amount of sulfur in No. 4 heating oil by half. The law, Intro 194-A (also known as Bio-Heat 2012), also requires all heating oil after that date to include at least 2% of biodiesel fuel. Another recently passed state law mandates a 99% reduction of sulfur in No. 2 heating oil, which accounts for about 70% of heating fuel used in the city.

State and federal governments are offering plenty of incentives to switch, so it is certainly a good time to make the investment. At Plymouth Rock Energy, we offer low-rate financing on energy-efficient equipment, which can help relieve the financial burden otherwise incurred. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) offers incentive programs to help make converting an affordable reality for homeowners and building owners.

Sam Ritter is Chief Operating Officer of Plymouth Rock Energy, Woodmere, N.Y.

For more information about Plymouth Rock Energy, please visit [www.plymouthenergy.com](http://www.plymouthenergy.com) or call 855-32-POWER (855-327-6937).