

- Heating Oil -

Greater Efficiency and a Greener, Brighter Future

Myths v. Facts

Now, more than ever before, there is an ongoing and vigorous debate over the use of various energy resources and their potential impact on the environment. As part of this debate, much is being written about the United States' reliance on foreign oil, the impact of fossil fuels on the environment, and the need to continually improve energy efficiency.

Energy consumers, business leaders, policy makers, and the news media do not need more rhetoric; they need s to ensure a balanced dialogue on the economic and environmental benefits of all fuels. As such, it's important to understand and separate commonly held myths about heating oil from the facts:

Myth **Oilheat is expensive.**

Facts *Heating oil actually costs less than it did in 1980, when adjusted for inflation, and serves about 23 million Americans in 8.6 million households. Sources: [Oilheat America](#)*

Myth **Oilheat does not produce as much energy as other fuel sources.**

Facts *Each gallon of heating oil contains approximately 139,000 units of thermal energy (BTUs), making it an economically competitive energy source. Source: [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#)*

Myth **Oilheat today is inefficient.**

Facts *Oilheating systems in use today use substantially less fuel than they did just 20 years ago. For example, an average home that used more than 1,200 gallons of heating oil in 1989 now uses only 900 gallons, or 25% less. This decrease in usage is attributable to advances in equipment efficiency and household conservation. New heating oil systems boast energy efficiency ratings from 83 to 94 percent. Source: [National Oilheat Research Alliance](#), [America Petroleum Institute](#)*

Myth **Oilheat produces many harmful air emissions.**

Facts *Heating oil burns almost 95% cleaner than it did in 1970. Today, residential oil burners produce less than one-third of one percent of total U.S. particulate emissions. Sources: [Oilheat America](#) , [American Petroleum Institute](#)*

To gain even greater efficiency and lower emissions, the industry in coordination with state environmental agencies is working to cut the sulfur content of heating oil from 1,500 parts per million to 15 parts per million by 2018. Source: [National Oilheat Research Alliance](#)

Myth **Oilheat has not responded to concerns about global warming.**

Facts *Since 1970, the heating oil industry has cut its total greenhouse gas emissions by approximately one third. Source: [National Oilheat Research Alliance](#)*

Myth **Oilheat is not renewable.**



Facts *In addition to its sulfur reductions, the heating oil industry is moving toward zero emissions with new fuel blends, called Bioheat[®], which contain between 2 and 20 percent renewable fuel. When combined with Bioheat[®] Oilheat has the potential to reduce emissions to the lowest level of any fossil fuel. Source: [National Oilheat Research Alliance](#)*

In fact, if just 5 percent of Americans heated their homes with today's Bioheat[®], it would be equivalent to taking 700,000 cars and trucks off the road. Source: [Oilheat America](#)

Myth **The heating oil industry does not contribute to the local economy.**

Facts *Each year, the heating oil industry accounts for \$20 billion in sales and \$1.9 billion in payroll for 49,000 Americans. The fact that half of the U.S. energy workforce is expected to retire in the next 10 years, when combined with the heating oil industry's commitment to renewable fuels, means that there will be thousands of good-paying jobs available for highly trained technicians, engineers, researchers, oil field workers, and others. Sources: [Center for Energy Workforce Development](#)*

Myth **The heating oil industry is dependent on foreign energy from hostile suppliers.**

Facts *This "myth" is complete nonsense. The United States produces the vast majority of its heating oil and imports 10 to 15 percent from Canada, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Canada and Mexico also provide the United States with a significant amount of its crude oil. Advances such as Bioheat[®] mean more heating oil can be produced in the Midwest instead of the Middle East. And new exploration technologies such as horizontal drilling also mean the United States can responsibly produce more oil at home. Source: [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#)*

Myth **Heating oil is dangerous.**

Facts *Heating oil is combustible (flash point 126° F), but not flammable (flash point <52° F); making it far less volatile than most other fuels. Source: [Sprague Energy](#)*

When all of the economic and environmental factors are considered, heating oil has a great story in terms of its reliability, affordability, and sustainability; and with Bioheat[®], its future is even brighter.

This information was compiled by the Energy Communications Council, which represents the National Oilheat Research Alliance, the New England Fuel Institute, the Delaware Valley Fuel Dealers Association, the Fuel Merchants Association of New Jersey, the Maine Oil Dealers Association, the Massachusetts Fuel Council, the Oil Heat Comfort Corp., Inc. of Long Island, the New York Oil Heating Association, the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association, and the Virginia Petroleum, Convenience, and Grocery Association.

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