

NORA - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

▶ WHAT IS THE NATIONAL OILHEAT RESEARCH ALLIANCE OR “NORA”?

NORA is a national oilheat research and development, consumer education and technical training program established in 2000 by the U.S. Congress and then-President Bill Clinton. The bill that created NORA had geographically diverse and bipartisan supporters in Congress and strong support from the oilheat industry.

▶ WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF NORA?

NORA's mission is to conduct research, development and deployment of new technologies such as ultra-efficient heating equipment and renewable alternatives; promote consumer education and oilheat conservation; and manage the certification of home heating technicians into proper oilheat installation, safety and repair.

▶ HOW IS NORA PAID FOR?

NORA is funded at no cost to local, state or federal governments because it is a “check-off” program. The Federal Government requires a fee be placed on the oilheat industry of two-tenths of a cent (\$.002) per gallon of heating oil. This fee is paid by oilheat retailers when they receive product from a terminal or wholesale distributor. NORA is not paid for by a tax, has no deficit impact and does not contribute to the national debt.

▶ ARE NORA FUNDS USED FOR LOBBYING OR COMPETITIVE MARKETING?

Not a single NORA dollar has been or will ever be used for lobbying or to contribute to political campaigns. Additionally, NORA funds are not used in any marketing campaigns to discourage customers from using a competing product or to encourage fuel switching to oilheat.

▶ IS NORA THE ONLY “CHECK-OFF” PROGRAM?

There are many check-off programs in the country that exist for the purpose of educating consumers on the benefits and latest developments in a specific American industry and that further research into new technologies, industry best practices and emerging market applications, and promote market competitiveness. There are numerous examples in the agricultural industry including the egg, potato, cotton, beef, pork, and dairy industries. The U.S. propane industry also has a national check-off program.

▶ WHY DOES THE AMERICAN OILHEAT INDUSTRY NEED NORA?

The U.S. oilheat industry is a small, fragmented industry and oilheat retailers or “dealers” are themselves mostly small, family owned- and operated-businesses. Unlike many other energy industries, the oilheat industry lacks a well-funded national trade association that exclusively advocates on its behalf, and unlike electric and gas utilities, does not have regulated “rate-making” process by which it can impose a uniform fee on itself in order to fund research and development, consumer education or national training programs. NORA provides an opportunity to the oilheat industry to coordinate and collaborate in pursuit of these goals.

▶ HOW DOES NORA BENEFIT AMERICAN CONSUMERS?

NORA brings meaningful, tangible benefits to current and future oilheat consumers. They obviously benefit from new, ultra-efficient oilheat equipment and cleaner-burning oilheat fuel that has become available thanks to NORA. Consumers and the nation as a whole benefit from NORA's development of renewable alternatives which are now making their way to the market, including a biofuel-blended home heating fuels like [Bioheat®](#), which reduce the demand for foreign energy. NORA consumer education programs promote public awareness of these new technologies, as well as the latest in home efficiency, fuel conservation and safety practices. NORA certification programs give consumers the peace of mind in knowing that their technician has been properly trained in the most current installation, service and safety practices. NORA also actively educates the insurance industry to understand the needs of homeowners and the relative safety benefits of oilheat.

▶ IS NORA SUPPORTED BY EFFICIENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES?

Yes, NORA enjoys support from a growing list of pro-efficiency and environmental groups, as well as industry, consumer and labor groups. Additionally, policymakers at all levels and branches of government have seen the direct economic and environmental benefits of NORA, as well as the benefits of new technologies and alternative fuels developed by NORA and the technical training and conservation programs now deployed in many states. They have found invaluable NORA-provided research, studies and other information as they consider policies that affect the oilheat industry and its consumers.

▶ WHAT IS THE STATUS OF NORA TODAY?

Unfortunately, the NORA program has been suspended since the law authorizing it expired in February, 2010. Congress must pass legislation in order to renew it. Thankfully, a bipartisan group of lawmakers in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate have introduced legislation to strengthen and renew NORA. **We need members of Congress to co-sponsor the “NORA Reauthorization Act of 2011” (H.R.1756/S.949) and see that it passed as soon as possible.**