

TALKING POINTS IN SUPPORT OF NORA REAUTHORIZATION ACT

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Background:

- In 2000, the United States Congress passed and then-President Bill Clinton signed into law federal legislation to create the “National Oilheat Research Alliance, or “NORA.”
- NORA was tasked with research, development and deployment of new home heating oil technologies, consumer education programs, and certification of home heating technicians into proper oilheat installation, safety and repair.
- Unlike other federal energy programs, NORA is completely funded at no cost to the federal Government. It is funded through a \$0.002 (two-tenths of a cent) per-gallon assessment on the home heating oil industry rather than on U.S. taxpayers and has no deficit impact.
- The program was created with a five-year “sunset” or expiration date, but was renewed by Congress in 2005 but expired again in February, 2010.
- Currently Congress has not yet renewed this vital program.

Since its creation, NORA has:

- Developed highly efficient boilers and furnaces. In 2000, the top efficiency rating for oilheat equipment was 86 AFUE. Consumers can now purchase a furnace with a rating of 95 AFUE and a boiler with a rating of 93 AFUE.
- Developed an ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) specification and secured UL (Underwriters Laboratories) approval for biofuel-blended heating oil, so that these renewable fuels can be used safely in home heating equipment.
- Worked (and will continue to work) closely with the oilheat specialists at Brookhaven National Laboratory on cutting edge ultra-efficient and ultra-low emissions technologies, as well as compatibility with sustainable energy sources like Solar.
- Educated consumers about high efficient equipment, latest conservation measures and other steps they can take to conserve energy and use less fuel.
- Trained thousands of technicians on how to service, repair, install and replace oilheat equipment, to improve conservation, safety and efficiency in a home.
- Developed oilheat tank training, safety and inspection procedures, and procedures for proper tank removal or repair and appropriate environmental cleanup.

Action Needed:

- Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in Congress to renew and strengthen NORA. Representatives Bass (R-NH), Welch (D-VT), Pallone (D-NJ) and Lance (R-NJ) have introduced H.R.1756 in the House. Senators Shaheen (D-NH), Reed (D-RI), Snowe (R-ME), Sanders (I-VT) and Burr (R-NC) have introduced S.949 in the Senate.
- This legislation would require an even greater investment in research and development of ultra-efficient and renewable home heating oil technologies, as well as deployment of these new technologies into the marketplace.
- It would continue the top-notch consumer education and technical certification programs the industry has come to rely on over the past decade.
- Members of Congress should co-sponsor and support the quick passage of this legislation.