



Government Relations Issues Update

Home Energy Audits

TREB Key Message

REALTORS® support the provincial/federal Home Energy Audit Rebate Program that encourages homeowners to voluntarily assess the energy efficiency of their home. Like all Ontarians, REALTORS® want to see a greener, healthier environment for future generations and energy efficient housing can play an important role in achieving those goals.

Energy Audits should remain voluntary. A mandatory system of energy audits has a number of serious implications for home buyers and owners.

Background

For a number of years, the provincial and federal governments have implemented programs that encourage home owners to voluntarily conduct energy audits and retrofits of their homes to make them more energy efficient. After completing an energy audit and performing eligible retrofits, identified by the audit, home owners are eligible for provincial and federal rebates.

In February 2009, the provincial Minister of Energy and Infrastructure introduced Bill 150, the Green Energy Act, which proposed a number of significant changes to Ontario's energy system and conservation efforts. One of the key changes proposed by this legislation was to make home energy audits mandatory prior to the sale of a home. Under this legislation, home sellers would have been required to make the home energy audit rating available to all potential purchasers.

TREB and OREA raised a number of concerns with the provincial government, including:

- Shortage of energy auditors would make energy audits inaccessible and create lengthy delays in the home selling process;
- Discrepancies in home energy audits;
- Cost of home energy audits; and,
- Impact of home energy audits on property value.

TREB and OREA took significant action to communicate these concerns to the provincial government, including:

- A Member Call to Action which generated over 4,300 e-mails including almost 1200 from **TREB** Members and 800 from the public
- Media relations efforts that generated significant media and public attention on this issue
- Meeting with key government representatives including the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure
- Meeting with key Ministry policy staff
- Meeting with key Opposition Party critics

As a result of these efforts, the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure amended Bill 150 to give home buyers the option to waive the requirement to receive a home energy audit rating prior to purchasing the property.

Bill 150 was approved on May 14, 2009, but is not yet in force. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy had indicated that it expected the home energy audit requirements to take effect in 2010. However, Ministry staff have suspended any work in this regard and it is believed that the government does not intend to move forward with the regulations required to implement the home energy audit requirements of Bill 150.