

# What is Efficiency First?

Efficiency First is a national nonprofit trade association that unites the Home Performance workforce, building product manufacturers and related businesses and organizations in the escalating fight against global warming and rising energy costs. Efficiency First represents its members in public policy discussions at the state and national levels, to promote the benefits of efficiency retrofitting and to help our industry grow to meet unprecedented demand for quality residential energy improvements.

*“We should have the policy of efficiency first” — Rep. Peter Welch, Vermont*

## Mission

Our mission is to be a voice for the Home Performance industry, and to advocate for policies that will create the foundation for a sustainable and scalable home retrofit market. We will accomplish these goals by promoting a combination of industry standards, financing and performance-based incentives, through collaborations with legislators, government agencies, public utilities and professional organizations. We believe that a public-private market must exist where programs drive demand to a well-regulated private sector that will compete on efficiency and innovation.

Residential efficiency improvements can reduce energy waste in most homes by 20 to 40 percent. A nationwide initiative to improve the efficiency of America’s 128 million homes has the potential to unlock significant reductions in building-related greenhouse gas emissions, improve national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil, and generate long-term energy savings for American consumers.

Expansion of the Home Performance industry also represents a crucial path to economic growth in the face of historically high unemployment and unprecedented weakness in the construction and manufacturing sectors. Consumer demand for efficiency retrofits will create hundreds of thousands of high-paying local jobs that cannot be outsourced overseas, while stimulating a surge of manufacturing of building materials primarily made by American workers.

## Objectives

### Public Policy Initiatives

Efficiency First’s lobbying and advocacy efforts are focused on three key factors that will stimulate rapid growth and local job creation in the Home Performance industry:

- National Incentives  
As prescribed in the Retrofit for Energy and Environmental Performance (REEP) legislation now pending in Congress, Efficiency First believes that government incentives are the key to driving a surge in consumer demand for home energy retrofits. The REEP performance-based incentives – deployed as direct consumer rebates – reward modeled energy savings, not specific products or technologies, and leverage private investment to minimize the burden on public funding sources. These incentives are technology neutral, removing government from the role of trying to pick winning technologies and freeing the market to innovate and reward performance.
- Financing  
Access to capital is one of the keys to widespread adoption of home energy retrofits, allowing homeowners to amortize upfront investments over time, and often achieving positive cash flow when loan payments are offset by reductions in monthly energy bills. Efficiency First supports diverse lending programs that will make it easy for consumers to invest in cost-effective home energy improvements.
- Industry Standards  
Efficiency First supports the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program as a model for efficiency retrofitting, including third-party verification. We support strong contractor standards and certification based on Building Performance Institute ([www.bpi.org](http://www.bpi.org)) contractor accreditation.