

Measure to save power clears House and Senate

By Gargi Chakrabarty, Rocky Mountain News
April 26, 2007

The Colorado House and Senate have passed a bill that would direct utilities that deliver electricity and natural gas to launch energy-saving programs, including offering rebates to customers for installing energy-efficient lights, appliances and insulation.

Gov. Bill Ritter is expected to sign the bill in the coming weeks.

House Bill 1037 would allow utilities to levy a surcharge on residential and commercial customers to pay for the programs.

Former Gov. Bill Owens vetoed a similar bill in 2006.

"We estimate that households and businesses will save \$1.2 billion as a result of this legislation," said Howard Geller, executive director of the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project.

House Bill 1341 - the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission reform bill - passed the Senate and likely will reach Ritter's desk this week.

The bill changes the panel's mission by putting more emphasis on protection of public health and changes the board size from seven to nine members while reducing the number of oil and gas industry representatives from five to three.

A separate bill on biofuels died. It would have mandated that 10 percent of all transportation fuel sold in Colorado except jet fuel contain 10 percent ethanol by the end of next year.