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An Act To Provide a Rebate for Clean Energy Geothermal Heating Units

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §3211-D is enacted to read:

§ 3211-D. Geothermal energy rebate program; fund

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, "geothermal system" means a mechanism or series of mechanisms designed to heat air or water by a method that extracts or converts the heat energy naturally occurring beneath the earth's surface.

2. Geothermal energy rebate program. To the extent that funds are available in the fund established in subsection 3, an owner or tenant of residential or commercial property located in the State is entitled to a rebate for a geothermal system that is installed in accordance with this subsection after July 1, 2008 and connected to the electrical grid.

A. A geothermal system designed to heat water qualifies for a rebate of 25% of the cost of the system, including installation, or \$1,250, whichever is less, if the system is installed by a licensed plumber who has been certified by the commission to install such systems or by a licensed plumber working in conjunction with a person who has been certified by the commission to install such systems.

B. A geothermal system designed to heat air qualifies for a rebate of 25% of the cost of the system, including installation, or \$1,250, whichever is less.

In the case of a newly constructed residence, the rebate must be available to the original owner or occupant.

3. Funding level; fund. The commission shall assess transmission and distribution utilities to collect funds for the geothermal energy rebate program in accordance with this subsection. The amount of all assessments by the commission under this subsection must result in total program expenditures by each transmission and distribution utility that do not exceed 0.005 cent per kilowatt-hour. To the extent practicable, the commission shall establish and collect the assessment in a manner that is consistent with the assessment made under section 3211-A. The commission shall establish a geothermal energy rebate program fund to be used solely for the purposes of this section. All assessments made under this subsection must be deposited in the fund. Any interest on funds in the fund must be credited to the fund. Funds not spent in any fiscal year remain in the fund to be used for the purposes of this section.

4. Rules. The commission shall adopt rules necessary to implement the provisions of this section, including procedures and standards for demonstrating qualification for a rebate under this section. Rules adopted under this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

5. Report. The commission shall report by December 1st of each year to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utilities and energy matters a description of actions taken by the commission pursuant to this section during the prior 12 months.

6. Limitation to residents of State. Participation in the geothermal energy rebate program and fund established in this section is limited to residents of the State.

Sec. 2. Standards. The Public Utilities Commission in establishing procedures and standards for demonstrating qualification for a rebate under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3211-D shall allow a person to demonstrate the date a system was installed by the date of a net metering arrangement with a transmission and distribution utility or a dated bill of sale for the system.

SUMMARY

This bill provides for rebates for the installation of geothermal heating systems for residential or commercial property owners or tenants.