



COALITION  
*to keep*  
**MICHIGAN WARM**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm members are urging Michiganders to #GetWinterPrepared now as Fall officially begins on Friday. With unseasonably high temperatures expected this weekend, people can forget that cold weather is just around the corner.

"Homeowners and businesses only think about cutting back on their energy use when they receive their first energy bill after a cold month," Justin Schott, Chairperson of the Coalition said. "With the nice weather outside, now is the time to caulk and repair weather stripping around doors and windows."

Coalition Spokesperson Monica Martinez said it is estimated that more than 600,000 Michigan households receive some type of state, private, and federal funds for home heating assistance annually. Nearly twice that many are eligible for some type of agency or program assistance.

"High winter bills can be a challenge, especially for families with limited incomes. But, there are steps families can take now. Apply for the home heating credit prior to September 30 and do some simple home repairs to be better prepared for cold weather," Martinez said.

Coalition members caution that while energy assistance programs will gear up in October, not all programs are likely to be operating on the first of the month. Programs take time to get back to full operating capacity and federal Low Income Energy Assistance Program funds still need to be finalized.

The coalition urges everyone to take the following steps now to #GetWinterPrepared:

- 1) Apply for the Home Heating Credit, which must be postmarked by September 30.  
[http://www.michigan.gov/taxes/0,4676,7-238-43513\\_66852-330928--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/taxes/0,4676,7-238-43513_66852-330928--,00.html)
- 2) If you are a senior, call your utility and let them know. There may be certain protections for seniors or those customers with medical conditions.
- 3) Watch your usage. Winter heating bills are always a surprise. Rather than turning up the thermostat, grab a sweater. This is also a good time to check weather stripping on windows and change the furnace filter. Believe it or not, even getting the dust bunnies out from under your refrigerator can be helpful.
- 4) Most of all be safe. If you are using alternative energy sources to heat your home, remember that generators must be run outside the home and attached garages. Also, any open flames act like campfires, which belong outdoors.

For more tips to #GetWinterPrepared go to [www.coalitiontokeepmichiganwarm.org](http://www.coalitiontokeepmichiganwarm.org).

Since 1987, the Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm has worked to improve the availability of financial and human resources to meet the energy assistance needs of Michigan's low-income households. The members perform this mission through the exchange of information, developing new ideas, public education, and advocacy. **The Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm is the only voice in the state focused exclusively on low income household energy needs.**