

## DOE Publishes 2019 Representative Average Unit Costs of Five Residential Energy Sources

By Dave Schryver

The Department of Energy (DOE) released its forecast for the representative average unit costs of five residential energy sources for the year 2019 as required by the Energy Policy and Conservation Act. The average unit costs were developed by the Energy Information Administration (EIA) and based on simulations used to produce the February 2019, EIA Short-Term Energy Outlook. This cost information is used, among other things, to comply with Federal Trade Commission requirements for labeling.

The five sources included in the DOE release are electricity, natural gas, No.2 heating oil, propane and kerosene. Below is the representative cost for each of the sources in terms of Per Million BTU's and in dollars:

- ◆ Electricity: \$38.83 per million Btu or 13.2 cents/kWh
- ◆ Natural Gas: \$10.38 per million Btu or \$1.038/therm or \$10.79/MCF
- ◆ No. 2 Heating: \$20.80 per million Btu or \$2.86/gallon
- ◆ Propane: \$21.65 per million Btu or \$1.98/gallon
- ◆ Kerosene: \$24.64 per million Btu or \$3.33/gallon

As you can see from the numbers, natural gas remains the most affordable residential energy source.

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### FUN GAS FACT:

“Christmas trees” are used year round in the natural gas industry, not just during the holidays, but they are a little different than the one next to your fireplace. A Christmas tree is an assembly of valves, spools, and fittings designed to control the flow in or out of the gas well. It also is used to detect sand, corrosion, temperature, erosion, and pressure.

## Energy conservation: 10 ways to save energy

There are many different ways to reduce your household's energy use, ranging from simple behavioral adjustments to extensive home improvements. The two major motives for conserving energy are to save on utility bills and protect the environment.

### 1. Adjust your day-to-day behaviors

Energy conservation can be as simple as turning off lights or appliances when you do not need them.

### 2. Replace your light bulbs

Although energy efficient bulbs are more expensive off the shelf, their efficient energy use and longer service lives mean that they cost less in the long run. Energy efficient bulbs are the clear winners in terms of their environmental and financial benefits.

### 3. Use smart power strips

“Phantom loads,” or the electricity used by electronics when they are turned off or in standby mode, are a major source of energy waste. Smart power strips, also known as advanced power strips, eliminate the problem of phantom loads by shutting off the power to electronics when they are not in use.

### 4. Install a programmable or smart thermostat

A programmable or smart thermostat can be set to automatically turn off or reduce heating and cooling during the times when you are asleep or away.

### 5. Purchase energy efficient appliances

On average, appliances are responsible for roughly 13% of your total household energy use. Although energy efficient appliances usually have higher purchase prices, their operating costs are 9-25% lower than conventional models.

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Energy conservation continued

### 6. Reduce your water heating expenses

Water heating is a major contributor to your total energy consumption. Other than purchasing an energy efficient water heater, there are three methods of reducing your water heating expenses: you can simply use less hot water, turn down the thermostat on your water heater, or insulate your water heater and the first six feet of hot and cold water pipes.

### 7. Install energy efficient windows

Windows are a significant source of energy waste, which can amount to 10%-25% of your total heating bill. To prevent heat loss through your windows, you can replace single-pane windows with double-pane ones.

### 8. Upgrade your HVAC system

An HVAC system is composed of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment. Heating alone is responsible for more than 40% of home energy use.

### 9. Weatherize your home

Weatherizing, or sealing air leaks around your home, is a great way to reduce your heating and cooling expenses. The most common sources of air leaks into your home are vents, windows, and doors. To prevent these leaks, you should ensure that there are no cracks or opening between the wall and vent, window, or doorframe.

### 10. Insulate your home

Insulation plays a key role in lowering your utility bills through retaining heat during winter and keeping heat out of your home during the summer.

Energy conservation is important and beneficial for many reasons. You can **save money, increase your property value, and protect the environment** all through simple energy-saving measures. These are great benefits you can gain from saving energy no matter your exact motivation for conservation in the first place. By simply taking a small step toward living a more energy-conscious lifestyle, you can begin to enjoy all of the perks of being energy efficient.

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