

## Heating Group Touts Clean Use of Oil

While some Americans may see the Gulf catastrophe as a symbol of the heating oil industry, the true symbol of today's industry is a soybean field or a solar panel. Soy and the sun are two renewable energy sources increasingly used to heat U.S. homes and businesses, according to the heating coalition called the *Energy Communications Council*.

Soy and other heating oil feed stocks got a boost from a major political player just last month. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed mandate that resident receives renewable heating oil – blended with 2 percent biodiesel made from soy and other natural oils – called Bioheat.

Other northeastern states, the nation's primary heating oil region, are considering similar Bioheat legislation and programs. Among the nation's 300 heating oil retailers that offer Bioheat, some are marketing Bioheat with 20 percent biodiesel, a B20 blend.

If everyone using heating oil used a B5 blend, 5 percent biodiesel/95 percent oilheat, 400 million gallons of regular heating oil could be conserved. This would increase American energy security and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Although these innovations and the production of ultra-low sulfur heating oil are expected to virtually eliminate emissions from heating oil, the industry is also expanding its focus on renewables to further cut emissions by taking full advantage of solar technology. The sun can allow homeowners and business owners to conserve heating oil and lower their energy bills.

The industry has installed systems connecting hundreds of furnaces and boilers to rooftop photovoltaic cells, or solar panels. This advance in heating technology achieves dramatic cuts in both electricity and oil consumption.

Solar-oilheat systems use thermal collectors to generate electricity that moves heating oil from its tank into a furnace or boiler. Solar-oilheat may also be used to heat swimming pools and in-floor radiant systems.

The oilheat industry's use of solar technology also extends to test burners containing PV cells energized by the oil flame. The National Oilheat Research Alliance (NORA) and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority are studying a prototype appliance designed to generate enough of its own electricity to operate even during blackouts.

Heating oil adds more than \$1 trillion in total economic value to the U.S. gross domestic product and the oilheat industry accounts for \$1.9 billion in payroll every year for 49,000 Americans. America's future economic security clearly depends on a diverse energy mix that includes an environmentally sound supply of heating oil and Bioheat.

The ECC is comprised of the New England Fuel Institute, the Delaware Valley Fuel Dealers' Association, the Empire State Petroleum Association, the Fuel Merchants Association of New Jersey, Oil Heat Comfort of Long Island, the New York Oil Heating Association, Inc., and the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association, and is funded by NORA.