

ENERGY MATTERS

Steady Electricity Costs Benefit Minority Families

(NAPSA)—A new study that's fueling concerns about the challenges faced by families when it comes to rising energy costs also contains some positive news about the cost of electricity.

The bad news is energy costs for the average U.S. household are soaring and sharply escalating gasoline prices are straining the budgets of many minority families.

Those are the findings of a new study by the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE). The study contends that the cost for consumer energy sources has doubled in recent years for low-income families. Their energy bills have grown by thousands of dollars while average family income rose by just a few hundred.

Most of the increased cost burden on minority families can be traced to higher gasoline prices and increased costs for natural gas and other home heating fuels.

The good news is that among consumer energy types, electricity has maintained a stable price trend over the past decade. Some say this is because low-cost coal generates more than 50 percent of electricity in the U.S.

The study projects that African-American and Hispanic households with annual pretax incomes below \$50,000 will spend about one-quarter of their after-tax income on energy.

"Rising energy costs are disproportionately impacting minority families," said Joe Lucas, vice president of communications, ACCCE.



Among consumer energy types, only electricity has maintained a stable price trend over the past decade. Some say this is because low-cost coal generates more than 50 percent of electricity in the U.S.

He says that energy costs are consuming an amount usually spent on food, housing or health care and that U.S. Census data indicate that energy price increases have outpaced increased earnings.

Said Lucas, "Expanding the use of our domestic coal resources—a primary source of low-cost electric energy—is an immediate, commonsense policy option that makes sense particularly given that technology is making coal an increasingly clean source of energy for American families."

The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity is a non-profit, nonpartisan partnership of companies involved in producing electricity from coal.

To learn more or for a complete copy of the study, visit www.americaspower.org.