Consumer Alert

Are You Eligible For The 2008 Home Heating Credit?

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) doesn't want you to miss your chance to receive the Home Heating Credit (HHC) from the state of Michigan! If you are eligible, a HHC will help you pay your winter heating bills. The HHC is funded by federal Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) grants. Many eligible low-income consumers either do not know about the credit or fail to take advantage of it. If you use a large portion of your monthly income to pay heating costs, you may be eligible for the HHC for the 2008 tax year. The size of the credit may change from year to year depending on the amount of Michigan's LIHEAP funding. However, last year's average credit was approximately $141.

Who can apply?

Eligible customers must meet the following guidelines:

- Your homestead is in Michigan,
- You own or rent the home (including a rented apartment or mobile home on a lot in a mobile home park) where you live, and
- Your income is within the limits listed in the chart below or you qualify based on alternate guidelines including household income, exemptions, and heating costs. Check the HHC form (MI-1040CR-7 for more information).

Number of Exemptions*	***Maximum Income***
1	**$11,443**
2	**$15,415**
3	**$19,386**
4	**$23,329**
5	**$27,301**
6	**$31,243**

**Note: Add $3,971 for each additional exemption. Special exemptions are available if you are deaf, blind, a person with a disability, or age 65 or older.*

Customers who qualify for the HHC are also eligible for the Winter Protection Plan. Contact your local utility for more information.

How to apply?

You can apply for the HHC by filling out form MI-1040CR-7 for 2008. You do not have to file a Michigan tax return to apply for the HHC. There are many ways to get an HHC form:

- Forms will be available on the Michigan Department of Treasury website (www.michigan.gov/treasury) in January 2009. Enter "Home Heating Credit" in the search box on the left side of the page.
- You can file for your credit on line. Visit the Department of Treasury website at www.MIfastfile.org for additional information.
- You can call the Department of Treasury at 1-800-367-6263 to receive a copy.
- By early February 2009, paper copies of the forms will also be available at most public libraries, Northern Michigan post offices, Secretary of State branch offices, Department of Human Service offices, and other locations where income tax forms are available.
- If you have a hearing or speech impairment, you may call 517-636-4999 (TTY).

Some electric and natural gas utility companies have forms available and personnel who can help you complete the forms; call your company to see if they will assist you. Your utility company may also have a list of agencies that can help you complete the form.

When to apply?

File your HHC form as soon as you know your household income for 2008. The sooner you file the form, the sooner you will get the credit. **THE DEADLINE FOR FILING THE FORM IS SEPTEMBER 30, 2009**.

Before you send your completed HHC form, check to make sure it is complete and accurate, and that you have signed it. Make a copy of it and keep the copy with your records, or keep a copy of the number of exemptions you are claiming, the date you filed it, and the amount of the credit to use in verifying the status of your credit application with the Department of Treasury.

If you are eligible for a HHC and are a customer of an energy utility regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission or an Alternative Energy Supplier, you can also participate in the Winter Protection Plan. Contact your utility company or alternative energy supplier for details.

If you have trouble paying your heating bills while you are waiting for the credit and receive a shut-off notice, call your utility company **immediately** and tell the service representative that you submitted a HHC form. If your utility company is regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission, you cannot have your heat shut-off while you are waiting for your credit.

When will you get the credit?

It will take the Michigan Department of Treasury several weeks from the time it receives the claim form to process until you receive your energy credit. Once you have filed your credit, you can check on its status by calling 1-800-827-4000 or on-line at http://www.MIfastfile.org.

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