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Subject:	[EXTERNAL] : Fuel Optimization Program
Date:	Wednesday, January 8, 2020 4:32:31 PM

Restivo's Heating and Air Conditioning

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To whom this may concern,

My name is Jack Restivo, Owner and Lead Salesperson for Restivo's Heating and Air Conditioning. I tell you this because holding both roles allows me to see things from different points of view. This current rebate program was the best program Rhode Island has ever had pertaining to heating and cooling products. For many years, people who have been heating with oil, propane and electric had no rewards or incentives to change their systems or to try to reduce their heating bills. The truth to this is there really was not much room for improvement available to them until the introduction of the high efficiency heat pump program.

The sales team and I have visited over 500 homes over the past year for estimates- with 75% of them requesting heat pumps. I feel like we have wasted our time and money trying to help people we can no longer help because you are eliminating the critical component that pertains to the homeowners heating with oil and propane. We have many customers that we have recently visited would be counting on this program in the spring as well. We also have customers currently in progress as well as others waiting to begin the process. I am concerned primarily about the ones we have already invested time and/or money into visiting that we have already proposed and presented to them. In many cases, these people were not even considering the energy audit until we brought the entire program and benefits to them. We were the driving force behind almost every person that we put through this program and it is a shame that this may now be ending.

When you limit rebates to only electric heat customers, the numbers are going to drastically reduce across the board. If you look back on our numbers you will find many of the displacements were either oil or propane and in many cases we had potential electric customers that were already offsetting their energy costs with alternate heating sources. They would no longer qualify because the electric bills would not work in their favor. I honestly think that having that stipulation in the program for the electric customers is a disservice to them. These potential customers are already experiencing high utility bills and that is the reason for an alternate means of heating. Whether it be wood, pellet, etc., these people were actually being penalized for trying to reduce their high electric bills. On the other hand, the propane or oil people in many cases would also offset their costs and do the same to reduce their energy bills but they just needed to exist in order to take advantage of the program. This makes no sense!

I am hoping that my thoughts will be shared with those who can make a difference in this decision. At the very least an extension for a certain period of time, with a deadline for interested parties to take advantage of the program and get on the energy audit list should be implemented. If the customer has had an energy audit or has one booked the rebate should be honored. We have several customers who have had their audits but were waiting for the holiday season to pass or for the winter weather to break. These customers have either already done or are planning an audit for the very near future with the intention of installing a heat pump before spring time and during the time frame that we had told them

this program was slated for. Many of our customers do not want to be without heat or be inconvenienced for an installation during the winter months. These people are under the assumption that the program is in place and are getting ready to cut their oil or propane bills after the winter is over for a variety of reasons. Many would have preferred to do their installation before the winter to save another season of high energy bills. The wait time for the energy audit discouraged many of these folks- causing many of them to wait. We have a great deal of estimates in the hands of customers that were anticipating this program to still be in existence as the weather breaks.

Our involvement in this program has been wholehearted. I have made a commitment for print advertising aimed at this program in South County and areas with heavy usage of propane, oil or electric. We have also made commitments to all of the smaller newspapers for a full page insert to run 10 weeks in each publication- with emphasis in areas where oil and propane are most popular. In order to get the discounted price from the printer, we had to make one specific ad (NOT TO BE CHANGED) so they could do bulk printing. We are only halfway through that newspaper's advertisement schedule. We are also promoting on three separate radio stations- encouraging people to take part in this enhanced rebate program that the State of Rhode Island, National Grid & RISE are currently invested in. Our company has spent thousands promoting this program as we were told it would be in existence for an certain period of time and that we should not worry about the program ending until after the end of summer 2020 at the earliest.

This program has had an enormous effect on our sales growth in 2019 and helped reduce energy costs for many Rhode Islanders. We would be more than willing to provide customer feedback on their energy savings to help keep this program intact. The increase in gross sales had a direct correlation with an increase in our work force. We were able to increase our entire staff to keep up with the demand. An abrupt removal of this program will most likely result in an equally abrupt reduction in our workforce. I am sure that my company is not the only company experiencing this kind of influence from this program. This entire industry has witnessed a change for the better as a direct result of the implementation of this enhanced rebate program. Rhode Islanders have embraced this new technology and can now see the benefits of what these systems can provide for heating their homes. We recently did a project with This Old House in Jamestown. The episode was centered on a state of the art heat pump system for the entire home and will enlighten anyone who has doubts about the benefits of these types of systems in New England.

The benefits of this rebate program for Rhode Islanders do not stop with the consumers. When a homeowner installs one of our heat pump systems, their current heat source remains. This enables the customer to lower their energy bills but also allows the existing fuel provider, whether it be oil or propane, to keep their customer. Over the years, when a homeowner was about to change their heating source, they would usually go from Oil to Propane, Propane to Oil, or Electric to Oil/Propane. When the switch took place the customer's business was usually lost all together from the original fuel provider. When adding heat pumps to the home, in most cases, the existing system remains which in turn allows the Oil or Propane company to retain their customer in some fashion. More importantly, heat pumps give homeowners a second source of heat which is far more efficient. The increased value of having such a system installed will also increase the resale values of their homes.

As stated above, our company has visited hundreds of homes since the program's inception. We are anticipating a large number of those people to reach out to us now that the holidays are over. I am not looking forward to explaining this decision of prematurely ending a program designed for their benefit. At least I know we, Restivo's Heating and Air Conditioning, did our part in trying to help the residents of Rhode Island that heat with oil and propane and electric. I would hope that anyone involved with the decision making for the extension of this program would reach out to me for further information if needed. I urge all involved to

extend this program through the summer so these consumers will get what was originally laid out for them.

I can always be reached at 401-273-9849. Meanwhile, as we get calls from disappointed Rhode Islanders we will be forwarding your contact information to them so this can be explained directly to them.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jack Restivo