



NEWS

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CNAIMA Head Hails Progress of Rural Star – Urges Congress to Expedite Action on Bipartisan Home Star Jobs Initiative

Washington, D.C. – The head of America’s leading association of insulation producers today praised the House Agriculture Committee for approving the Rural Star loan program and urged the full Congress to move quickly in adopting the bipartisan Home Star residential energy retrofit jobs initiative.

“Yesterday, Democrats and Republicans on the House Agriculture Committee recognized what Rural Star means to job creation, energy savings, and environmental protection in rural America,” said Kate Offringa, the president and chief executive officer of the Council of the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association. “A similar bipartisan coalition on both sides of Capitol Hill strongly supports the expedited passage of Home Star. The sooner Congress can get these measures to the president’s desk, the quicker we can create productive jobs for small businesspeople in distressed communities across the country.”

The Rural Star measure that passed the House Agriculture Committee by voice vote yesterday would establish a \$5 billion consumer loan program administered by rural electric cooperatives. The cooperatives would provide "micro loans" to their consumers for energy efficiency upgrades at interest rates no higher than three percent, with a maximum 20-year repayment period. Rural Star, Offringa pointed out, is aimed at making it easier for homeowners to install upgrades – including insulation - to the structure of their homes, thereby reducing monthly energy bills and safeguarding the environment from harmful gases.

“Once signed into law, Rural Star and Home Star mean immediate jobs for tens of thousands of caulkers, insulation installers, and other contractors who have been hurt by the recession,” Offringa said. Conservative estimates suggest that Home Star alone could generate 168,000 jobs over its first 18 months of implementation. “The crude reality,” Offringa said, “is that the annual energy lost through inadequate levels of insulation in U.S. buildings is 30 times greater than the energy we’re expected to lose in the tragic Gulf oil spill.”

Home Star passed the House in May with bipartisan support and has already drawn bipartisan backing in the Senate. The Council of NAIMA this week urged the Senate to incorporate Home Star as part of the small business jobs bill currently on the Senate floor.

“Whether as part of Rural Star, Home Star, or Building Star, insulating American homes and buildings is a ‘win-win-win’ for job creation, energy savings, and the environment,” said Offringa.

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About the Council of NAIMA

The Council of the North America Insulation Manufacturers Association advocates for policies and programs that encourage and incentivize increased energy efficiency through insulation in new and existing residential and commercial buildings and industrial applications. Membership in the Council of NAIMA is open to thermal and acoustical insulation manufacturers – regardless of insulation product type – and their suppliers located in North America.