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Ulster County Government Energy Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure energy and resource efficiency are explicitly considered and examined throughout the County government and County decision-making. This policy establishes guidelines for cost-efficient and sustainable resource consumption and allows the Ulster County Department of the Environment to coordinate implementation of the policy specifics through the Ulster County Government Energy Policy Implementation Guidebook. This guidebook is not a static document and may be modified in the future to reflect emerging “best practice” energy conservation and energy management strategies and initiatives.

Background:

- The efficient and conscientious use of energy by municipal government is essential to modeling good citizenship, accountability, and service.
- Local government has a responsibility to be a leader in workplace resource efficiency.
- Optimizing energy conservation and energy management can result in significant cost savings and enhanced environmental stewardship.
- The combustion of fossil fuels - through electricity generation, heating and transportation - results in carbon dioxide emissions. Increased concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere contribute to the greenhouse effect and global climate change.
- A reduction in energy consumption by Ulster County government will reduce greenhouse gas emission attributable to County operations.
- As energy costs continue to rise, energy conservation measures provide costs avoidance/cost savings as well as help to decrease domestic demand for volatile foreign oil imports.
- To effectively address energy conservation by a large municipal entity, both operational efficiency and employee usage patterns must be addressed.

The Ulster County Legislature hereby resolves and declares that it is the policy of Ulster County Government to:

- Recognize the energy demand and environmental impact associated with the County’s operation and management of facilities necessary to provide services to the people of Ulster County;
- Establish efficient energy management within County government operations as a fundamental operational objective;
- Execute an implementation strategy to detail the goals and action items of this policy;

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- Implement, where practicable, energy efficiency measures through a variety of mechanisms such as life cycle analysis and energy performance contracting;
- Provide for the verification and commissioning of fundamental building systems to ensure they are designed, constructed, installed, calibrated, and operating as intended, in order to achieve exemplary energy performance goals;
- Adhere to voluntary green construction and remodeling standards for buildings where appropriate, such as ENERGY STAR, and encourage various nationally supported and resource efficient standards, such as the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), for building excellence when appropriate and/or life cycle cost effective;
- Encourage operation and planning based on the prudent use of natural resources and minimize greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels, water use, and waste generation;
- Encourage the tracking, promotion, and publication of sustainable and energy efficient practices;
- Encourage vehicle fleet efficiency and the use of alternative fuels;
- Encourage the adoption of environmentally preferable purchasing policies for products, vehicles, and service and suggest that contractors and suppliers commit to similar energy efficiency and sustainability standards;
- Encourage the expansion of renewable energy use and other distributed generation technologies throughout the County's facilities and activities.
- Provide County personnel with proper training and education in implementing this policy;
- Serve as an educational and informational resource in energy efficient practices within the workplace and foster a sense of personal responsibility for optimal energy management in employees;
- Recognize and reward individual and collective efforts that contribute to the County's energy resource conservation policy goals;
- Regularly measure the County's environmental impact, including energy use, water use, fleet emissions, recycled materials, and waste generation;
- Support continuous energy performance improvements by funding new efficiency measures with funds derived from utility savings.
- Research and consider additional cost-effective technologies as they become available;
- Utilize innovative financing and contractual mechanisms, incentive and reward systems, and shared savings programs to further the County's goals.

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