

At the “Beyond Copenhagen Conference” at Berkeley yesterday, one of the clear messages was that energy efficiency is one of the most feasible routes forward on climate change. Energy efficiency has great interest not only to U.S. consumers, but also to countries like China that are concerned about energy security. The energy security issue is especially pressing because rising demand in Asia due to economic growth is going to push oil and natural gas prices through the roof and put pressure on coal prices as well. So this is definitely an avenue to pursue.

Coincidentally, according to the [NY Times](#), Massachusetts has just approved a bold new energy conservation program:

Massachusetts state officials announced on Friday new energy efficiency standards for utilities that aim to be the most ambitious in the nation.

The plan calls for a statewide reduction of 2.4 percent in electricity use and 1.15 percent in natural gas use annually for three years. The savings are to be achieved largely through \$1.6 billion in incentives for utility customers who take certain actions to conserve energy, like insulating their houses or replacing conventional light bulbs with compact fluorescent ones.

The reductions were mandated by the Green Communities Act, passed by the state Legislature in 2008. But the bill did not specify the reduction goals or how they were to be reached. The state Department of Public Utilities approved the plan late Thursday.

Notice to Californians: the Times also notes that this program may push the Bay State ahead of us in energy conservation.