

## Policies Needed to Improve Energy Efficiency, Revive Economy in Southeast U.S.

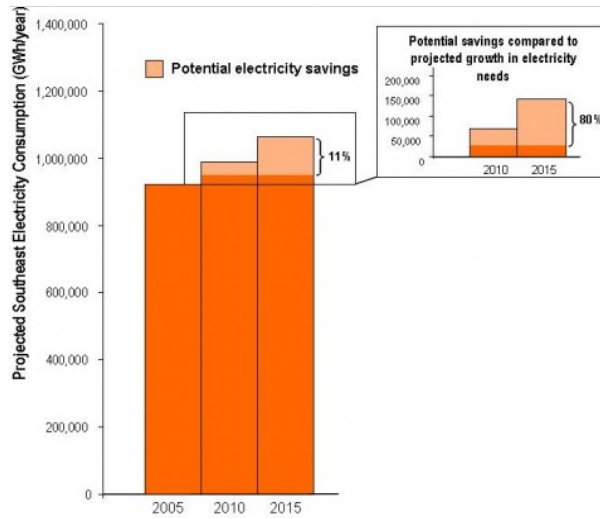
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Energy efficiency policies in the Southeast U.S. can help reduce electricity use by more than 10 percent over the next six years - saving the same amount of power generated by more than 30 coal-fired power plants, according to a [report](#) released today by the [World Resources Institute](#) (WRI), the [Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance](#) (SEEA), and [Southface](#).

“Most buildings in the Southeast needlessly waste energy,” said [Dennis Creech](#), a co-author of the report and executive director at Southface. “Though our region has shown progress in recent years, there remains immense potential to make homes and businesses more energy efficient. Our analyses in Georgia suggest that a 1 percent annual improvement in efficiency would save households \$700 million over the next decade with lower electricity and natural gas bills.”



**Projected Southeast Electricity Consumption** This chart shows near-term energy efficiency potential in the Southeast, compared to DOE projections for electricity consumption through 2015. The region can save more than 10 percent of total electricity use, which amounts to 80 percent of the expected growth in demand over that period.

According to [Power of Efficiency](#), the second report in a [three-part series](#) about energy opportunities in the Southeast United States, energy efficiency savings can be captured in the near future with prompt policy action by states. For instance, updating and enforcing energy codes for residential and commercial buildings will save consumers money and drastically reduce energy demands.

“Immediate investment in energy efficiency can pay significant dividends for years to come,” according to [Ben Taube](#), a co-author and executive director at SEEA. “Our core mission and efforts show that a regional focus on efficiency will help meet future electricity needs, enhance our economy, and protect the environment.”

Several examples from the region offer good starting points for broader efficiency efforts. One example noted in the report is a program in Virginia that offers a tax credit for developers who construct high-efficiency buildings for low-income residents. Data and billing information showed that these residents reduced their energy costs by more than 25 percent and saved an average of 15 percent on total monthly utility bills.

The authors found that tax credits, loan programs or other financial incentives that reward both utilities and consumers for energy savings are some of the best methods to relieve initial cost hurdles and provide long-term economic savings.

The report notes that a national energy savings target would help accelerate action, citing a recent [analysis](#) by the [American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy](#) that shows projected impacts of a federal Energy Efficiency Resource Standard. Such a policy could

create more than 50,000 new jobs across the region and save consumers nearly \$40 billion over the next 10 years.

“Southeast states have a huge opportunity with energy efficiency,” said [Eliot Metzger](#), an energy expert at WRI and also a co-author of the series of reports. “It’s the cleanest, cheapest energy option on the table and abundant throughout the region.”