

PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Program for Municipalities

By Shana Cook Mueller | June 28th, 2010

Is your municipality interested in providing a way for residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes to reduce the cost of heating, cooling and electricity? If so, a PACE program is something you should consider.

The Maine State Legislature passed a law this past session that enables municipalities to provide loans to residents for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. Such a loan would be secured by a lien on the resident's property and the resident would be responsible to pay assessments over time to pay off the loan. Municipalities can find their own source of loan funds to use for this program; however, the United States Department of Energy awarded a \$30 million grant to give the Maine PACE program a jump-start (quite a nice jump-start). Municipalities that want their residents to have access to the grant money for their PACE programs will have to follow the program procedures and rules that Efficiency Maine Trust is developing as we speak. In order to participate, municipalities will first need to enact a PACE ordinance. Efficiency Maine Trust is creating a model ordinance; however, it will be important to have an attorney review the ordinance to be sure the process outlined works for your municipality both in terms of its structure and the municipality's program goals.

Our firm is closely following the developments of Efficiency Maine and the grant money. We look forward to assisting municipalities through the process of establishing a local PACE program that will be easy to administer and will accomplish the goal of making cost effective energy efficiency improvements possible for folks who don't necessarily have the cash on hand or for whom capital availability has traditionally been the hurdle keeping them from making sensible investments.

If you have questions regarding this program, please contact Shana Cook Mueller at smueller@bernsteinshur.com or (207) 228-7134.