



# MAYOR'S NEWS RELEASE

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## **CITY TO USE ENERGY BLOCK GRANT FUNDS FOR UPGRADING ALL TRAFFIC SIGNALS IN TRENTON, UPGRADING LIGHTING, AND REDUCING ENERGY COSTS**

Mayor Douglas H. Palmer and U.S. Senator Robert Menendez announced today that Trenton is slated to receive \$847,800 in energy block grant funds that will be used to dramatically lower energy costs by replacing every traffic signal in the City and making key building upgrades.

“Senator Menendez has been instrumental in getting Congress to pass the energy block grant,” said Mayor Palmer. “Thanks to his leadership, we are now preparing to replace traffic signals at every one of Trenton’s 86 intersections with light-emitting diode, or LED, fixtures. We also plan to replace lights and lighting controls in City buildings, such as the planned Municipal Court complex, and to further cut our costs by replacing the chiller at the Police headquarters. These changes will not only reduce our energy costs dramatically, but will let us leverage dollars projected from energy savings over time into almost \$10 million for additional upgrades in the future,” the Mayor added. “This is not just about climate protection; it’s taxpayer protection.”

“In these tough economic times, with the resources local governments have available stretched thin, energy efficiency funding helps relieve local budgets, lowering energy costs and helping the city continue to deliver vital services,” said Sen. Menendez. “Installing new efficient lighting and replacing old lighting with LED fixtures is a win-win-win: it cuts energy costs, reduces emissions and frees up money from the city budget. New Jersey is a national leader in energy-efficient lighting production, and New Jersey companies will have the ability to bid for these contracts, so this investment can support local industry and keep even more jobs in the Garden State.

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“Mayor Palmer’s leadership of the U.S. Conference of Mayors is a big reason we’re here today, seeing jobs created and energy and money saved,” the Senator added. “He helped make energy efficiency and conservation funding the top national legislative priority of the Conference, and now we’re seeing that vision pay dividends.”

“Our energy savings strategy is a natural outgrowth of our Trenton Green initiative,” the Mayor explained. “We envision that the projects we are announcing today will create the leverage and initial funding to enter into a performance contract with an energy service company in order to apply our energy savings over 15 years to achieve additional retrofits and upgrades that drive costs down further – and continue to save taxpayer dollars.” The projects include:

- **Traffic Light LEDs (Project Cost \$400,000)**  
Trenton has traffic signals at 86 intersections, where the law requires at least two red-amber-green signals facing each direction – and for safety purposes, some intersections have three signals. Counting “pedestrian countdown” lights, the City has 2,887 lights. Light-emitting diode, or LED fixtures, use 90 percent less power and cut energy costs by more than 75 percent. In addition, because LEDs last eight to 10 years, labor costs also are significantly reduced. A City Public Works analysis shows that the *annual* energy bill for an LED traffic signal system would be about the same as the *monthly* bill for the current incandescent system (about \$11,000).
- **Municipal Building Lighting Retrofits (Project Cost \$80,000)**  
The city envisions replacing the lights and lighting controls in all City buildings, thereby realizing ongoing energy savings of roughly 35 percent – some \$600,000 per year.
- **Chiller in the Police Headquarters (Project Cost \$300,000)**  
The chiller is old and malfunctioning; replacement will save significant energy in the long term.

“We also need to be aware of the bigger picture – the impact of the entire American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, or federal stimulus funds,” Mayor Palmer said. “At this incomplete stage, we estimate stimulus funds will bring Trenton some \$13.8 million in funding. This does not count an additional \$6.2 million to assist low-income students. By conservative estimates, these funds will create and save more than 150 jobs.

“With the help of our Recovery Act ‘stakeholder working groups,’ we are urging local contractors to get their names on our approved contractor list – and to do so by calling our Division of Economic Development at 989-3528,” the Mayor emphasized.

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“As always, we will encourage the use of local contractors and subcontractors,” the Mayor said. “To take that local hiring effort a step further, we also are working with Isles, Inc., on training activities designed to prepare workers for the energy audit and retrofit work that we are discussing here today, as well as other residential retrofit activities for energy savings, such as the planned \$400,000 project on Dunham Avenue. Creating and saving jobs and engaging local businesses are major goals of our Trenton Recovery and Reinvestment effort.”

To write and implement its energy and cost savings strategy, the City plans to allocate \$67,000 for initial technical assistance and management, said Director Jerome C. Harris of the City Department of Housing and Economic Development. A key task will be integrating the energy block grant priorities related to federal stimulus funds with Trenton Green, he noted.

The partners in Trenton Green include the City of Trenton, PSE&G, the State Departments of Environmental Protection and Labor and Workforce Development, the Governor’s Office of Energy Savings, the Board of Public Utilities, Mercer County, Isles, Inc., the Regional Plan Association, and the New Jersey Sustainable State Institute.

Those Trenton Green partners have been examining ways to reduce the City’s energy use, including auditing energy use in City buildings and identifying potential upgrades that would cut use and costs. One such potential upgrade is the addition of rooftop solar panels at the Hermitage Avenue shopping center where the planned municipal court complex is being located, the Mayor said. “Flat rooftops are the ideal spot for solar – and our Trenton Green team is looking at this and other potential sites where we can use the power of the sun to cut costs even more.”

The former supermarket space on Hermitage Avenue will more than triple the Court’s current 8,000 square feet facility, alleviating current congestion, said the city’s Director of Inspections and Chief Construction Official, Len Pucciatti. Indeed, he said, solving the cramped conditions at the court entails adding a third courtroom, enabling more court sessions and helping reduce the backlog – as well as improving the facilities for collecting fees.

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“This energy block grant is about achieving municipal efficiency at multiple levels,” Mayor Palmer said.



*The Hermitage Avenue site of the planned Municipal Court complex will more than triple the work space, increasing the number of courtrooms from two to three, and will improve the space needed for record-keeping, public access to fee payment windows, attorney conferencing, and filing – as well as offering green lighting and heating and air conditioning.*

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