

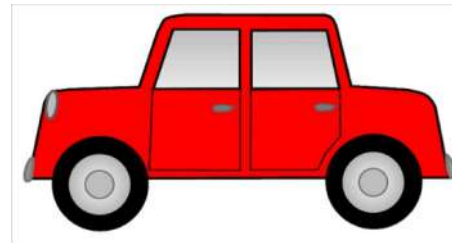
# The Energy Burden

## What It Is, How It's Felt, and What You Can Do

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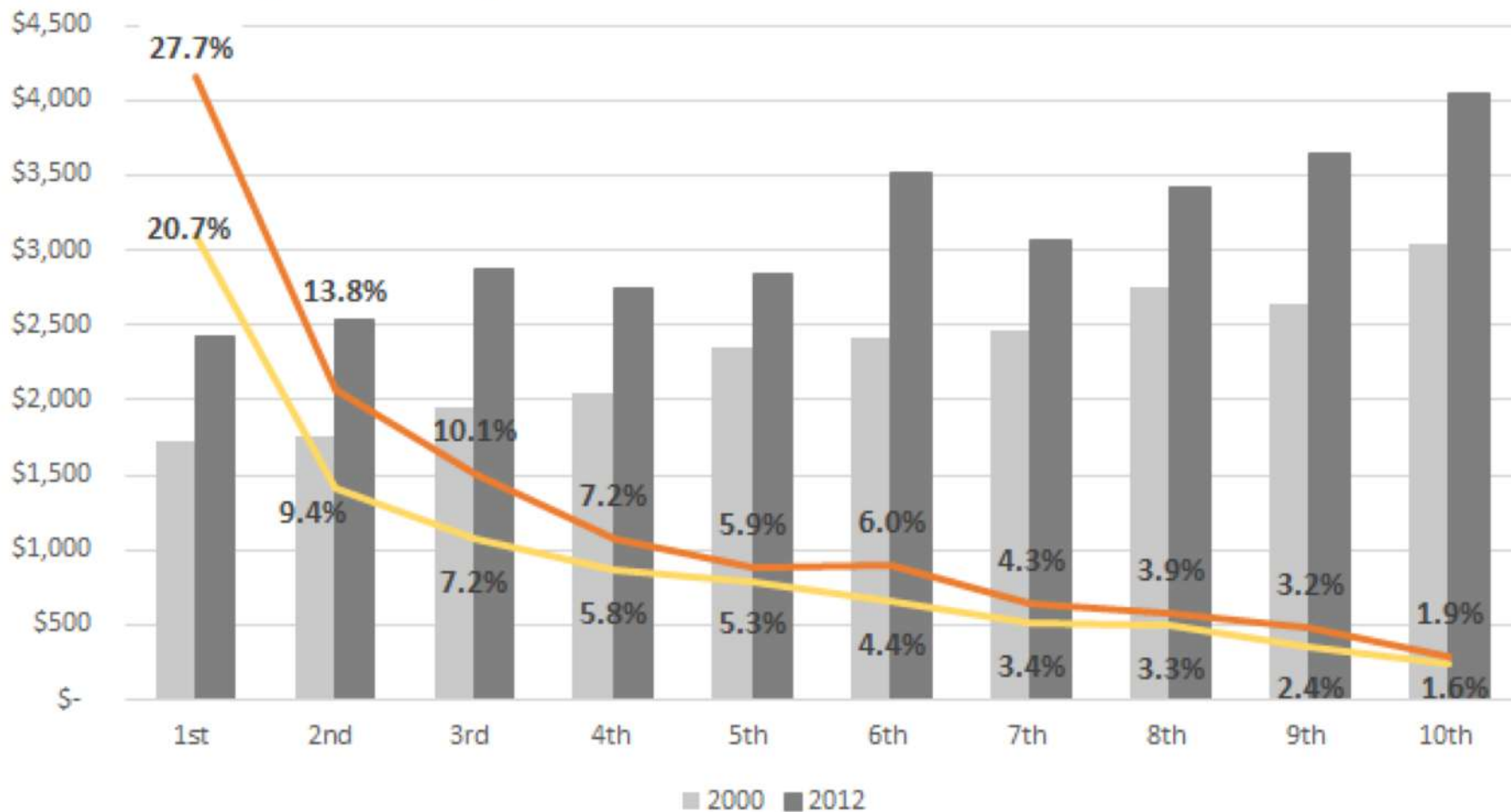
December 1, 2018

# What do we mean by “energy burden”?



# It's increasing.

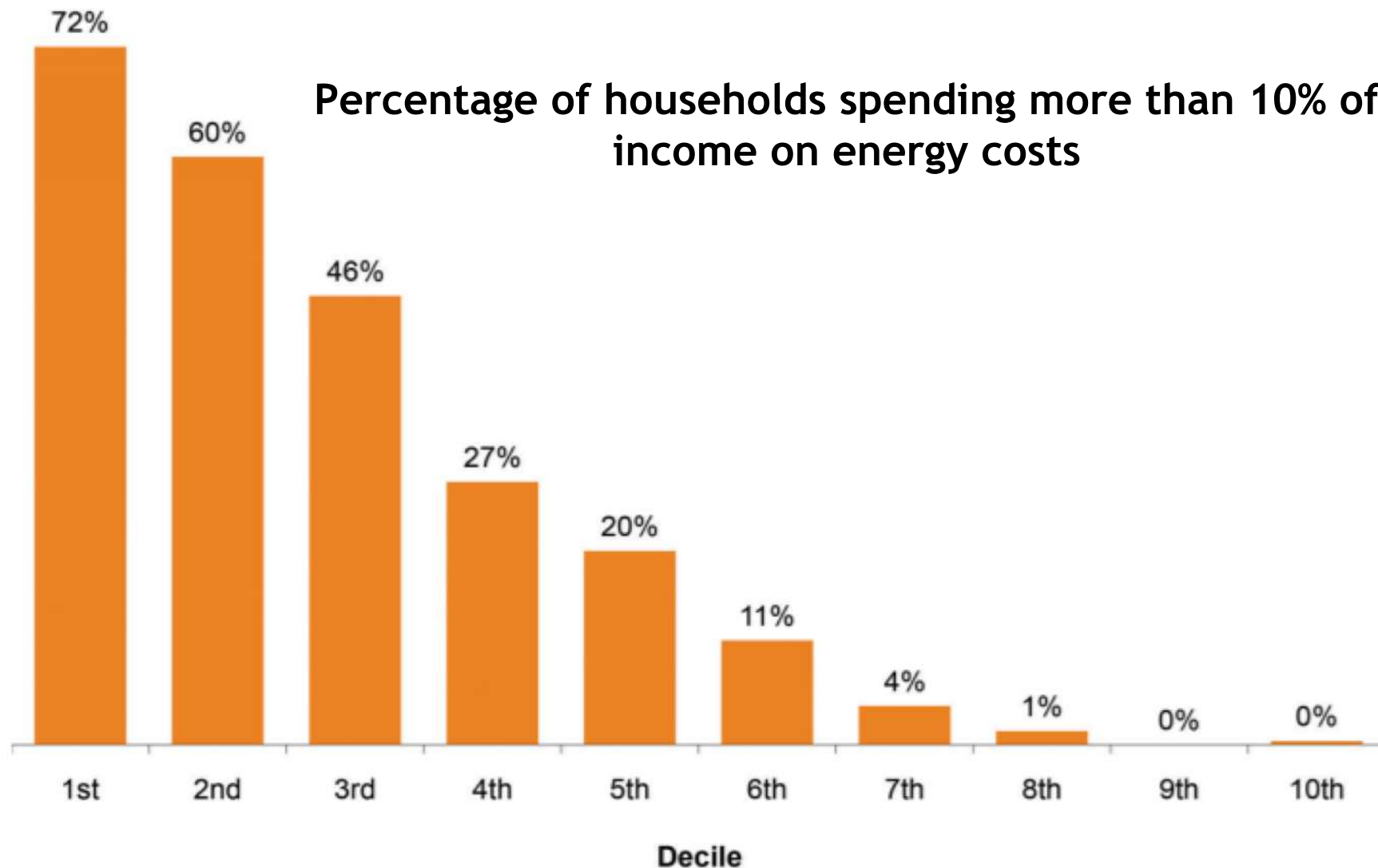
Average Annual Expenditures in Vermont Households 2000 vs. 2012



VLS Report. *Energy Costs and Burdens in Vermont: Burdensome for Whom?*  
Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey

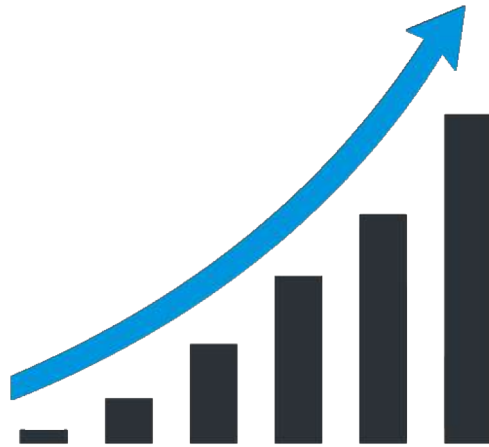
# It's disproportionate.

Percentage of households spending more than 10% of income on energy costs

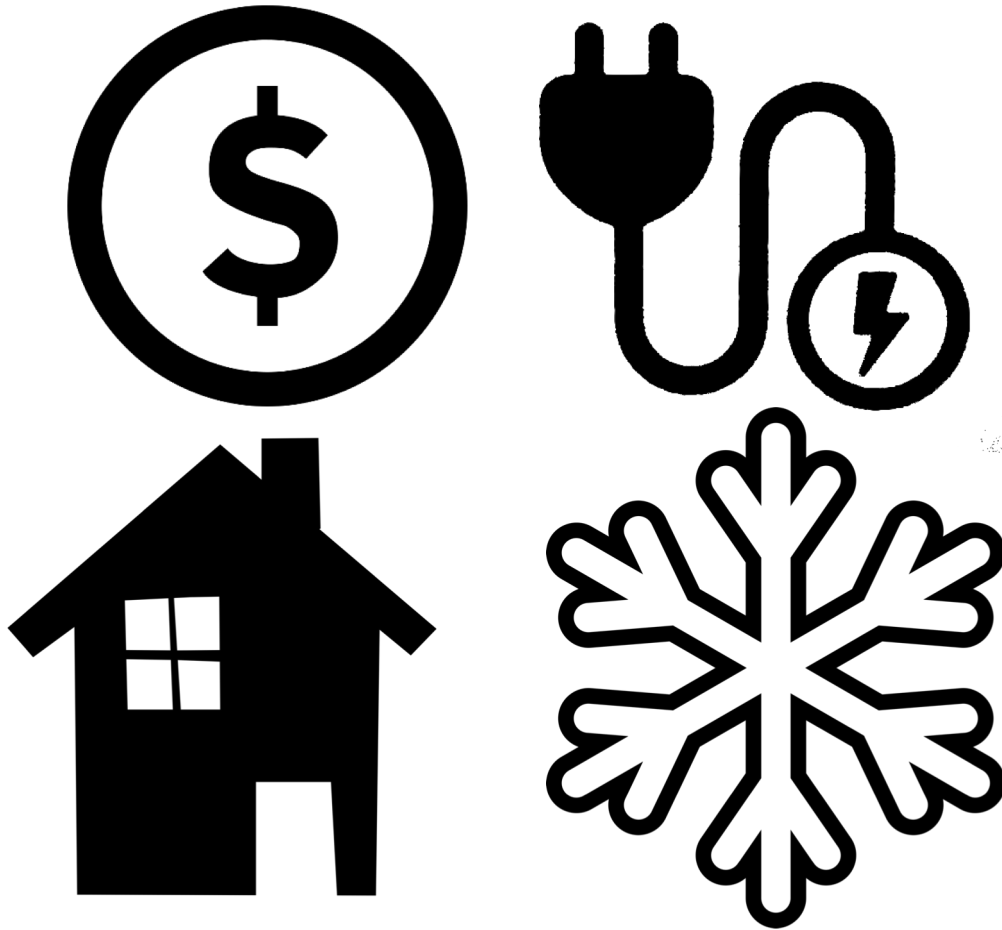


VLS Report. *Energy Costs and Burdens in Vermont: Burdensome for Whom?*  
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It has real effects.

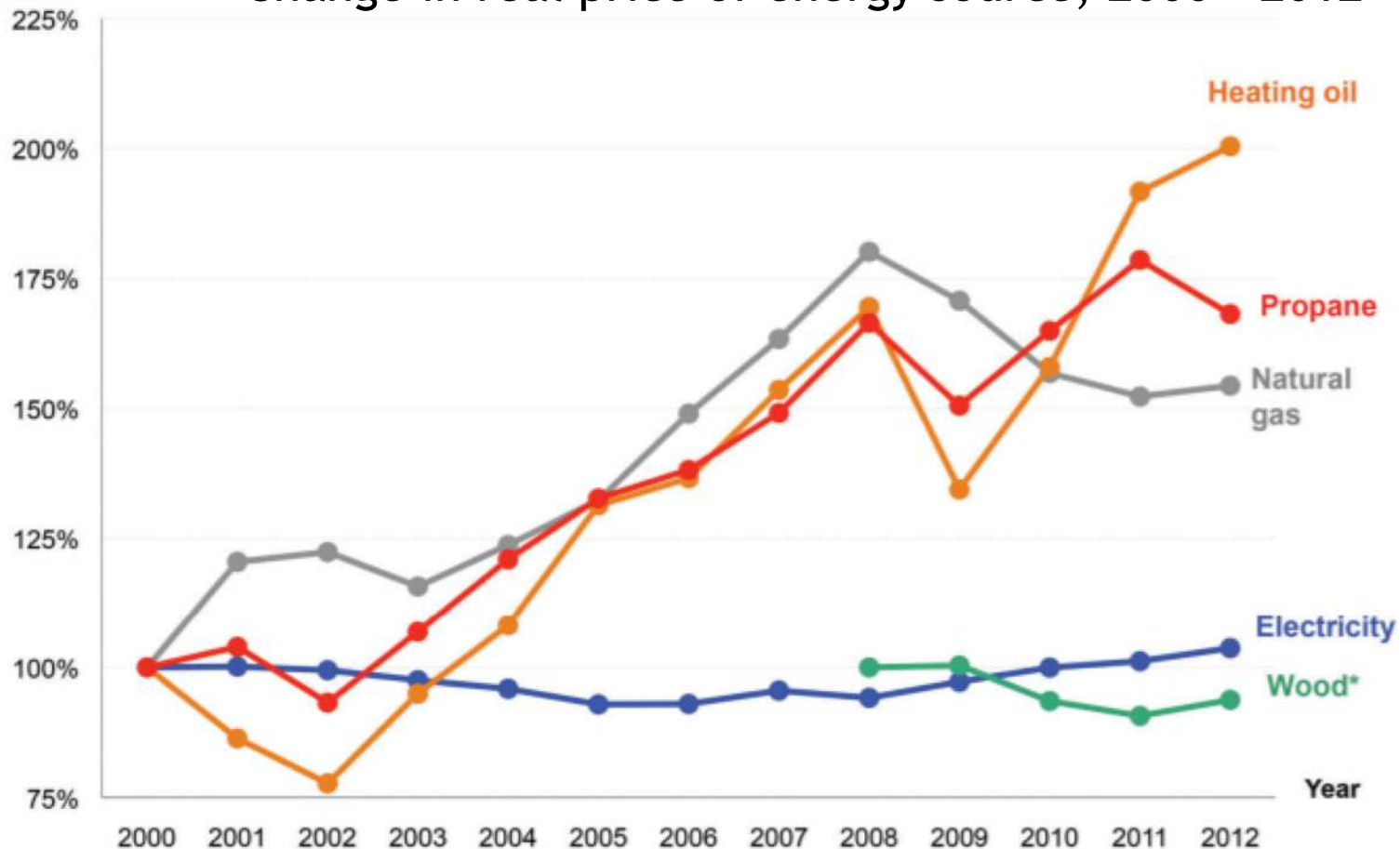


# Exacerbated by outside factors



# Energy prices are increasing

Change in real price of energy source, 2000 - 2012



\* Data on wood prices date only to 2008 and are based on small, unscientific surveys.

VLS Report. *Energy Costs and Burdens in Vermont: Burdensome for Whom?*  
Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey

What assistance is available?



# Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Run by the Department of Health and Human Services

*Administered differently in each state*

FY19 budget of \$3.69 billion

**Vermont FY19 Funding: \$20,446,280**

Eligibility: 150% Federal Poverty Level (HH1: \$18,210, HH4: \$37,650) or 60% state median income (HH1: \$31,786)

## **Benefits:**

Heating: \$21 minimum, \$1,537 maximum

Crisis: \$644 maximum

## **Households served FY16:**

Heating: 21,563

Crisis: 2,948

# Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

Part of the Department of Energy  
*Administered differently in each state.*

**Vermont 2016 Funding:** \$1,228,156

**Vermont 2017 Funding:** \$1,300,807

**Vermont 2018 Funding:** \$1,435,939

**Eligibility:** 150% Federal Poverty Level (HH1: \$18,210, HH4: \$37,650)

## **Benefits:**

Heating: \$21 minimum, \$1,537 maximum

Crisis: \$644 maximum

## **Households served FY16:**

Heating: 21,563

Crisis: 2,948



# Vermont Energy Assistance Resources

“The CAP map”

# How is assistance administered?

Fuel Assistance

Electric Assistance

Crisis Fuel Assistance

Weatherization Assistance

Local assistance resources

# What is Fuel Assistance?

It helps pay for heat

- Available between November and April
- Benefit is paid to the fuel supplier once a household is approved
- Recipients must reapply each year - renewal forms are automatically sent
- Sometimes called “supplemental” or “seasonal” fuel assistance
- Income eligibility: **185% of FPL** (HH1: \$1872/month, HH4: \$3870/month)
- Available to homeowners and renters (even if heat is included in rent)
- Amount based on client need
- Applications begin in July for priority households - better to apply early
- Apply online, in person, or via mail

# What is Electric Assistance?

It helps pay for electricity

Available year-round

Eligibility: 150% of Federal Poverty Level and residential customer of GMP

Can help with:

- 25% discount off the monthly charges for energy used

- Arrears forgiveness if customer new to the program and owes on a past bill

- Partial arrears forgiveness (50% of bill) if customer is currently enrolled in the program and owes on a past bill.

# What is Crisis Fuel?

It helps pay for emergency heat

Income eligibility: 200% of Federal Poverty Level; must also demonstrate crisis need

Can be used to

Purchase the primary source of your heat (e.g., electricity, kerosene, natural gas, oil, propane, or wood)

Purchase electricity if it's required to run your heating system

Have your furnace repaired or replaced

Negotiate payment plans

Work with your electric or natural gas company to prevent disconnection

Can apply starting last week of November through April

# What is Weatherization Assistance?

It pays for air sealing and insulation upgrades

Eligible if:

- Household income is at or below 80% AMI (<60% AMI prioritized)
- Someone in household receives Supplemental Security Income
- Someone in household receives Fuel Assistance
- Someone received fuel assistance last winter and is still eligible
- Someone in household is approved for fuel assistance this winter

May include:

- Whole house assessment of energy-related problems
- Diagnostics including energy audit, infrared imaging, carbon monoxide, and heating efficiency testing
- Energy efficiency retrofits: insulation, air sealing, and heating system upgrades and replacements

Apply through local CAP agency (refer to CAP map)

Often have long waitlists - get on the waitlist!



# Drawbacks & Barriers

LIHEAP - \$3.65 billion appropriated for FY19 (similar in FY18)

WAP - \$224 million for FY17

WAP - \$215 million for FY16

WAP - \$191.8 million for FY15

Short-term versus long-term need

Poverty is complex and energy burden is one piece of the puzzle

Systemic factors

# What can you do?

Get to know Your CAP Agency and other local resources

Model-sharing and having conversations  
Energy Advocacy Council

Raising Public Awareness

Incorporate the perspectives & lived experiences of  
people in poverty into your work

# Discussion

With 2-4 people sitting close by, talk about:

What could your role be as a Vermonter or an Energy Committee member be in alleviating the energy burden?

What are the other communities you are involved in? How can you bring this knowledge to them?

What organizations in your region might you partner with?

What are your unique skills that can help you can move this issue forward?

What do you need in order to be successful?

# Report out

**Share your ideas with the rest of the group**

QUESTIONS?

**Thank you!**

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