



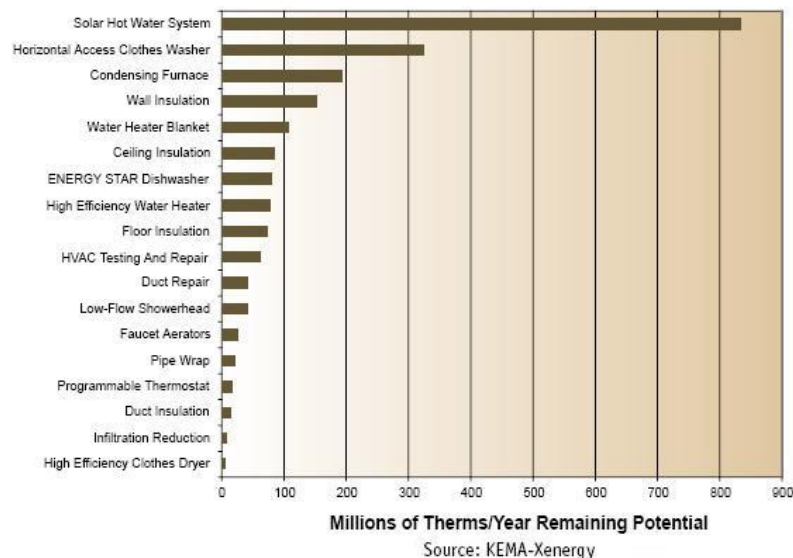
## Reducing Your Homes Use Of Gas

When providing an energy audit for a customer, my focus is typically one of finding the most cost-effective energy saving opportunities given their particular circumstances. Other reasons for an audit, such as concerns over comfort, maintenance problems, or the environment may come up. But getting the most savings for the least cost is typically the “tail wagging the dog”.

Past articles (available here - <http://www.theenergyguy.com/Articles.html>) have looked at the savings potential of a wide variety of energy options. This week I want to take a slightly different approach, and look at the energy options with the most potential for reducing the use of gas in your home.

A study released in April of last year by KEMA-Xenergy, an energy consulting group, showed that solar water heating systems could save more gas in California homes than any other technology: 971 million therms per year. Another study done by KEMA-Xenergy found that solar hot water could save more natural gas than any other efficiency technology in commercial buildings as well: 219 million therms of natural gas a year. All together, the state could save over a billion therms of natural gas or over 5 percent of our current use. A graph from their study is shown below -

**Solar Hot Water Systems Have the Greatest Natural Gas Saving Potential in California Homes**



You've probably heard the cost of gas is going up this winter and it's forecast to continue to go up in the future. Because our needs in California must increasingly be met with imported gas (we import about 85% today), reducing our use of gas will reduce costly imports and could significantly lower our cost for gas as well. If we were to reduce gas use in buildings by the aforementioned 5 percent with solar water heating, we could see the wholesale price of gas drop about 27 percent in Northern California and a 37 percent in Southern California (according to a study by ACEEE, the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy).

As far as the other energy options in the graph are concerned, the combined potential for energy savings is huge, and every single one of them is cost effective under most conditions. So, isn't it time you started (or finished?) addressing the potential for gas savings in your home or business?

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