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NEW GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES FOR RENEWABLE HEATING

AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS; A NEW FOCUS FOR 2017

Air source heat pumps have hit the UK – and are being pushed big-time as low carbon energy efficient heating systems.

And these little numbers look like a firm favourite to fit the bill for green heating in both the domestic and commercial arena.

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy have announced an increase in funding for this area from £430 million in 2015/16 to £1.15 billion in 2020/21. And this is where it gets really interesting for you and your home...

New in 2017 the Scottish Government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is giving more priority to air source heat pump systems and raising the RHI payback from 7.51p to 10.02p per kilowatt-hour – an increase of almost a third.

So what exactly is an air source heat pump? And why would you want one?

Well, in simple terms, they take the outside air, warm it up a little, then use it to heat the water in your central heating system. A bit like the reverse operation of a fridge or, like my Swedish friend said, like a reverse air-conditioner. Air source heat pumps produce three kilowatts of heat for every one kilowatt of electricity put in. With traditional heating systems

for every kilowatt put in you get less than one back.

RJ McCulloch, a company in south west Scotland with years of experience installing traditional heating systems such as oil, LPG and gas, now specialises in renewable heating systems. This puts them in a good position to advise on energy efficiency and consumption. Company owner Ross McCulloch says; "We are

... a potential RHI income of £14,280 and a saving on heating bills of up to £10,500.

registered Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS), which a necessity in order to install systems under the RHI. The MCS has a strict code of conduct, and holds us to very high standards for both the installation itself and the pre-installation detailed heat loss calculations we carry out that tells people how efficient a system will be for their home."

"The changes in 2017 mean that things are really going to pick up the pace with air source heat pumps. With reduced heating bills, as well as the RHI payments, home-owners, landlords and tenants alike can all benefit. You can also get a £10k interest-free loan from the government to help with installation costs. And with low carbon emissions, you're helping to save the planet too!"

To give you an idea of the potential for savings through installing an

air source heat pump, for an average well-insulated two-bedroom semi-detached house the RHI payments could be up to £2,040 per year [for the annual maximum of 20,000 kilowatt-hours] for the seven-year period the agreement runs. The cost of installing an air source heat pump would be around £10,000, which can be covered by an interest-free government loan.

If your home runs on oil or LPG, savings per year could be around £600, and for electric heating systems even more - up to £1,500.

So over the seven year period the RHI agreement runs, this gives a potential RHI income of £14,280 and a saving on heating bills of up to £10,500. And continued savings after that period.

All in all, it looks like air source heat pumps are a pretty good option if you're looking for a new heating system in 2017. In fact, they might be a good option for all of us, even if we hadn't even thought of upgrading until now!

