

Oral Testimony of Andrew deLaski
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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy
Hearing on
“Appliance and Building Policies: Restoring the American Dream of Home Ownership and
Consumer Choice”

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Thank you, Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Castor, and
Members of the Subcommittee.

My name is Andrew deLaski, and I am the executive director of the Appliance Standards Awareness Project, based at the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, a leading efficiency nonprofit organization. Guided by a broadly representative steering committee, ASAP carries out research, analysis and advocacy in support of standards that cost-effectively save energy and water, reduce utility bills and cut pollution.

I'd like to focus my remarks on how appliance and equipment standards save consumers money and bolster the electric grid, but would be threatened by H.R. 4626. And then I'll offer my support for H.R. 1355, the Weatherization Enhancement and Readiness Act.

The U.S. appliance and equipment standards program, established and updated numerous times on a bipartisan basis, protects U.S. families and small business owners from needless energy waste. Less energy waste means lower utility bills month after month, year after year for families. It means preserving electric grid capacity for growing electric loads, so we can win the race to lead the world in artificial intelligence and manufacturing. These standards ensure that manufacturers and importers include cost-effective energy-saving innovations throughout the wide variety of choices they offer, not just in top-of-the-line or specialty products.

Let me put some numbers to this. According to DOE, existing efficiency standards helped the typical U.S. household spend \$576 less on utility bills in 2024. Standards scheduled to take effect will boost annual savings to about \$700. That's real money, especially for families on tight budgets stressed by rising electricity prices.

While some cite diminishing returns for certain products, the overall picture for future efficiency gains is promising. Technology innovation keeps opening new opportunities for cutting energy waste.

We estimate that stronger standards which could be issued over the next decade could lower family utility bills by *another* \$150 driving total annual savings from standards to about \$850. And they could cut peak demand by 32 gigawatts, equal to the capacity of more than 100 large power plants.

I'd like to take a moment to address some inaccurate claims.

First, some argue that appliance standards restrict choice.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Visit any big box appliance seller or shop online -- buyers have a dizzying array of options -- more than 11,000 refrigerator models, more than 1,400 models each for washing machines and dishwashers. Efficiency standards ensure that all these choices, and models at any available price point, include energy innovations that lower families' bills.

Second, some have suddenly started blaming efficiency for products that fail early. There have always been lemons and it's frustrating when products break before they should. But it's just not accurate to blame efficiency standards. Rather, problems can be traced to some manufacturers cutting corners, like using plastic rather than metal parts. In other cases, manufacturers include features and gizmos that are unrelated to efficiency but that can be prone to failure. Finally, some manufacturers make it

hard to fix products by limiting access to diagnostic information and charging high prices for replacement parts.

H.R. 4626 would severely weaken the appliance standards law. It would *hand the executive branch* new powers to attack existing standards, *weaken states' rights* by blocking them from setting standards even when no federal standards apply, *eliminate accountability for DOE* to review standards periodically, and *set additional roadblocks* designed to stymie future progress.

Proponents of the bill claim it would protect consumer choices, but existing law *already ensures* that consumers have access to product features they value and *prohibits* DOE from eliminating categories of products that use a particular fuel type, such as gas.

At a time when utility bills are already outpacing inflation, this bill would mean even higher costs for U.S. families and businesses. It would lead to increases in electricity demand when that capacity is needed for AI and manufacturing. And it would create a

treacherous regulatory landscape for domestic manufacturers, potentially allowing importers to undercut them after they have invested in producing better products. I urge you to reject this bill.

In contrast, the weatherization bill before you is sorely needed.

This program provides essential help to households struggling to stay safe and pay their energy bills. This bill would reauthorize the program and ensure that more homes can be made ready for weatherization improvements and have access to adequate resources to carry out weatherization upgrades.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.