

May 20, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate

Dear Members of Congress:

The undersigned organizations write to share our opposition to the Congressional Review Act challenge (H.J.Res.111 and S.J. Res.58) to the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) final rule improving gas furnace energy efficiency standards (88 Fed. Reg. 87502), published on December 18, 2023.

Residential heating is the largest source of energy consumption for most U.S. households, and roughly half of all U.S. households heat their home with a gas or propane furnace. At a time when families are experiencing high energy costs, DOE's new federal standards for home furnaces would set a path toward meaningful energy bill savings.

Prior to the recent final rule, furnace energy efficiency standards had not seen any meaningful update since Congress first set them in 1987. Federal law requires that DOE periodically update appliance efficiency standards if stronger standards would be technologically feasible and economically justified. The recent DOE final rule is the product of a multi-year public rulemaking process and reflects the considered input of a wide range of stakeholders. The final rule is consistent with the recommendations of several furnace manufacturers and some of the nation's largest gas utilities, as well as consumer and environmental organizations.

Furnaces meeting the new standards use roughly 15% less energy than today's least efficient models. The new standards will reduce average annual heating bills for those replacing inefficient furnaces by about \$50 per year. Savings will be much higher for families that live in colder climates, especially if they live in an older, poorly insulated home. To be clear, the new standards will not require anyone to replace their furnace; rather, they will ensure that all purchasers – including builders of new homes, owners of rental properties, and homeowners – have a wider range of efficient options that will result in energy bill savings. The standards are especially important for renters, who rarely get to choose their own furnace but are stuck paying the energy bills and are disproportionately lower income households that need the bill savings the most. Additionally, the standards will cut 332 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions from furnaces over 30 years of sales as well as other harmful pollution, benefitting both public health and the climate.

It is vital that Congress reject these resolutions that would roll back standards set to reduce energy bills. We urge members of Congress to vote against these harmful measures.

Sincerely,

Steve Nadel  
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy

Andrew deLaski  
Appliance Standards Awareness Project

Margie Alt  
Climate Action Campaign

Shanika Whitehurst  
Consumer Reports

Johanna Neumann  
Environment America

Charlie Harak  
National Consumer Law Center,  
*on behalf of its low-income clients*

Lisa Frank  
PIRG

Susan Weinstock  
Consumer Federation of America

Timothy Ballo  
Earthjustice

Matthew Davis  
League of Conservation Voters

Joe Vukovich  
NRDC

Xavier Boatright  
Sierra Club

Cc:  
The Honorable Joe Manchin  
Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Chairman  
United States Senate

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Ranking Member  
United States Senate

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
Chair  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Energy and Commerce Committee  
Ranking Member  
United States House of Representatives

Members of the United States Senate

Members of the United States House of Representatives