

U.S. House Bill on Washing Machines Would Raise Household Costs, Keep Low-Performing Models

December 2024

The U.S. House of Representatives is expected to vote soon on a bill that would effectively undo recent energy efficiency standards for washing machines and raise total costs for families.

Representatives are [set](#) to vote on a bill (H.R. 7673, “Liberty in Laundry Act”) that would effectively undo new energy-saving standards for washing machines. The standards, finalized by the Department of Energy (DOE) in February, will save households money by reducing their utility bills. However, the bill would prohibit enforcing washing machine standards if they raise the purchase price of some models by even a penny—even if they save users far more on energy and water costs, as these standards do.

The bill says washing machine standards must be technologically feasible, economically justified, and save a significant amount of energy or water, but that’s what current law already requires (and the new standards achieve).



A recent YouGov [poll](#) found that 58% of respondents support “setting tougher energy efficiency standards for appliances,” while 16% are not sure and only 26% are opposed.

Washing machine standards set to reduce costs, emissions

The washing machine standards will ensure new models use significantly less energy and water while maintaining cleaning performance. The standards, which were [supported](#) by manufacturers, strengthen the separate efficiency requirements for top-loading and front-loading clothes washers, and will take effect in 2028.

Saving money for consumers

The standards will save consumers \$18 billion on utility bills from the use of new models sold over 30 years, DOE estimates. They will reduce annual utility bills by about \$23 for households replacing a typical inefficient model.

Efficient models are generally the best at cleaning

The standards will reduce energy use by common top-loaders by about 10%, equivalent to the efficiency levels achieved by models that have an ENERGY STAR® label today. Such models perform better than their peers, according to an ASAP review of Consumer Reports testing ratings. Roughly three-quarters of



ENERGY STAR models received a washing performance score of 4 or 5 (out of 5) while only about one-quarter of non-ENERGY STAR models achieved such ratings.

The standards also require front-loaders to meet efficiency levels equivalent to today's ENERGY STAR levels for that type. Most of these models already do so.

Protecting the environment

The standards will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 14 million metric tons over 30 years of sales, DOE estimates. And by easing water use from machines that are currently responsible for 16% of households' indoor consumption, the standards could help mitigate water challenges in the dry western United States.

For more information, please contact Madeline Parker at mparker@standardsasap.org

