ASAP
APPLIANCE STANDARDS AWARENESS PROJECT

Fact Sheet

Senate Bill Would Block Efficiency Standards, Raising Families' Energy Costs

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A bill introduced by Senator Mike Lee would effectively block the U.S. Department of Energy from updating efficiency standards for new appliances and equipment, even as technology improves, and would give the executive branch new powers that could be used to revoke or weaken current standards. This attack on standards would raise utility bills for households and businesses.

Efficiency standards ensure that new appliances and equipment in homes and businesses do not needlessly waste energy and water. They lower utility bills, minimize the need for expensive updates to grid infrastructure, and cut pollution—all while ensuring products maintain the performance and features that people expect.

Senator Mike Lee's bill, dubbed the Energy Efficiency Reform Act, would effectively block future standards and jeopardize existing ones. At a time when Americans' monthly utility costs are already rising, the bill would make the problem worse.

Lee bill would make it virtually impossible for DOE to update standards

The bill would impose a series of restrictions on DOE's ability to update standards. It would:

- Require that any new product standard set by DOE be achievable using any technologies or materials found in any such products sold today—even the very least-efficient ones. Even if more efficient technologies or materials are already incorporated in many models on the market, standards couldn't be set at levels that used those technologies rather than older ones.
- Prohibit setting standards that save less energy than an arbitrary threshold. This would have disallowed some of the biggest cost-saving standards, including recent standards for furnaces and electric motors.
- Require DOE to set separate standards for gas space- and water-heating equipment based on venting type, effectively prohibiting efficiency improvements for these products.
- Impose procedural roadblocks included in the Process Rule update recently proposed by the Trump administration, locking those hurdles into statute.

The next round of updated standards could reduce households' utility bills every year by about
$160
The Lee bill would block that progress.

The bill would also eliminate the primary accountability tool ensuring DOE regulators review standards on a regular eight-year cycle and—if technologically feasible and economically justified—update them. If DOE managed to set a new standard, the bill would prohibit it from taking effect for at least five years (instead of today's three years for many products). The bill would also require a minimum of 10 years between two consecutive standards (compared to today's six-year minimum).

Bill would threaten standards that are saving families and businesses money today

The Lee bill would give the executive branch new powers it could use to weaken or undo existing standards, even ones that have been in place for a decade or more. The Trump administration proposed 17 rollbacks last year, and this bill would provide a legal pathway to advance those and additional rollbacks.

American households have saved
$6,000
on their utility bills on average over the past decade because of standards.

Bill would directly cancel two major standards, bringing higher costs

The Lee bill would revoke 2023 standards for residential gas furnaces. Major manufacturers supported DOE finalizing the standards, which are scheduled to take effect in 2028. Canada has required similar efficiency since 2010.

The Lee bill would cancel furnace standards set to save households replacing an inefficient model
$350
over the equipment's life.

The bill would also cancel commercial water heater standards that DOE estimates will save businesses replacing an inefficient model almost $400 on average over the life of the water heater.

Bill would restrict states' ability to set their own standards

Under existing law, states can set their own standards for appliances and equipment for which there are no national standards. With limited exceptions, national standards preempt state standards.

The Lee bill, however, would significantly expand federal preemption. It would prohibit states from setting their own standards in cases when a federal standard has been revoked, leaving states powerless to fill the gap. It would also prohibit states from setting additional requirements for covered products, such as any safety requirements governing the use of gas appliances.

Efficiency standards are already required to benefit the public and are popular

Existing law already sets clear limits on DOE's authority. DOE can only set standards that save consumers more than they cost. DOE must ensure that consumers continue to have access to product features they value, and it cannot eliminate categories of products that use a particular fuel type, such as gas.

Polling has consistently shown widespread support for efficiency standards. A 2025 Consumer Reports poll found 87% of respondents support standards. A 2024 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.

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