

## States Can Avert Utility Bill Hikes from Federal Efficiency Standards Rollbacks

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*The federal appliance efficiency standards program, which has saved U.S. households \$6,000 on average on utility bills over the last decade, is under attack by the current presidential administration and Congress. States can protect those savings from disappearing by adopting a backstop policy for the federal standards.*

Appliance efficiency standards protect consumers and businesses by ensuring that all product choices available include efficiency innovations that lower total costs.

The Trump administration has proposed to weaken or eliminate federal energy and water efficiency standards for 17 product categories, including clothes washers, dishwashers, dehumidifiers, and faucets. Additional rollbacks could affect more products. Federal law prohibits these rollbacks, but Congress is considering legislation to remove the prohibition and the administration might finalize them regardless.



Manufacturers have warned that eliminating existing standards would result in low-quality, inefficient products entering the market from overseas competitors. These products would raise costs for consumers and businesses.

### States can prevent worst bill increases with a policy to adopt eliminated federal standards

States can protect their residents and businesses against some rollbacks by adopting a law that would make today's federal standards automatically apply in the state if the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) or Congress eliminates them. See the next page for ASAP's recommended legislative text.

Under current federal law, regulatory authority would revert to the states if DOE were to entirely remove standards for a given product. However, states would remain preempted by federal law if DOE were to remove only the most recent federal standard while leaving previous, weaker standards in place.

Several states adopted federal backstop provisions during the first Trump administration, including New York, Vermont, Colorado, and Hawaii. California periodically adopts all current federal appliance standards into its appliance regulations to protect against federal rollbacks.

## State implementation would ensure business as usual for manufacturers and retailers

Without states adopting a backstop policy, any federal elimination of existing efficiency standards could harm product manufacturers. They have [warned](#) that such rollbacks would undercut their U.S. factories, stranding investments and giving an advantage to foreign-produced products. For manufacturers and retailers, state implementation of the standards would maintain continuity. Manufacturers are already complying, and retailers are already only selling products that meet the federal standards.

For implementation activity, states with backstops would benefit from California's robust stakeholder education and enforcement efforts. California already requires manufacturers to certify compliance with the existing federal standards through its Modernized Appliance Efficiency Database System (MAEDbS), which could satisfy compliance certifications for any other state.

## Federal rollbacks could take effect quickly and cause damage

If DOE were to publish a final rule eliminating an appliance efficiency standard, the federal standard would stop being effective as soon as 60 days after publication. This could quickly create the damages described above where U.S. manufacturers are undercut, investments become stranded, and foreign-produced products are given an advantage.

## Our recommended legislative text for states:

*If any of the energy or water conservation standards issued or approved for publication by the Office of the United States Secretary of Energy as of January 20, 2025, pursuant to the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (codified at Parts 430-431 of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations), are withdrawn, repealed, or otherwise voided, the minimum energy or water efficiency level permitted for products previously subject to federal energy or water conservation standards in this State shall be the applicable federal standards as of January 20, 2025, and no such new product may be sold or offered for sale, lease or rent in this State unless it meets or exceeds such standards. This Section shall not apply:*

- i) to any federal energy or water conservation standard set aside by a court upon the petition of a person who will be adversely affected, as provided in Section 6306(b) of Title 42 of the United States Code, or*
- ii) if preempted by federal law.*

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