

Appliance Efficiency Standards

The Problem for Consumers

Utility costs—including electricity, natural gas, and water—make up just over 4% of average household spending, totaling about \$3,200 annually. Over a quarter of Americans face high energy burdens, spending more than 15% of their income on home energy.ⁱ Since the late 1980s, national appliance efficiency standards have helped lower utility bills while maintaining product quality and reducing emissions. Many of these standards now face rollback or elimination.

The Policy Opportunity

Product energy and water efficiency standards assure consumers that their purchases will meet minimum performance levels, reducing energy and water use and lowering household costs.

- **Household Savings:** The Department of Energy estimates that home and appliance efficiency upgrades can cut household energy bills by up to 30%.ⁱⁱ In 2024 alone, consumers saved over \$100 billion due to federal standards enacted since 1987.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Reduced Pollution:** Efficiency standards have been estimated to have cut household greenhouse gas emissions by roughly 2 billion metric tons between 2021 and 2024.^{iv}
- **Energy and Water Savings:** Residential energy use accounts for 14% of U.S. consumption—mainly for heating, cooling, and appliances—making household efficiency one of the most cost-effective strategies to reduce demand.^v

Consumer Reports' Positions

CR supports federal and state appliance efficiency standards for household appliances and fixtures with high energy or water resource costs –such as home lighting, heating and cooling systems– to help consumers and businesses spend less on utility bills, while also reducing energy and water waste.

CR's March 2025 nationally representative survey of 2,291 U.S. adults found overwhelming support for energy efficiency standards. Eighty-seven percent of Americans—including 94% of Democrats and 82% of Republicans—agree that home appliances for sale in the U.S. should be required to meet minimum levels of energy efficiency. When asked what an “energy efficient” label means to them, 73% of Americans said it signals cost savings on energy bills compared to an appliance without the “energy efficient” label. A little under half (46%) said such a label indicates a lower environmental impact than an appliance without that label.^{vi}

For more information on any of our work on appliance efficiency standards, please contact Chris Harto at chris.harto@consumer.org and Dylan Jaff at dylan.jaff@consumer.org.

ⁱ American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE): [Energy Burden Research](#)

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Energy: [Energy Saver 101: Home Energy Audits](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Energy: [Appliance and Equipment Standards Program](#)

^{iv} US Dept of Energy: [Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#)

^v EPA: [Greenhouse Gas Inventory Data Explorer](#)

^{vi} Consumer Reports: [March 2025 American Experiences Survey](#)

About Consumer Reports

Founded in 1936, CR is on a mission to create a fair and just marketplace for all. Widely known for our rigorous research and testing of products and services, we also survey millions of consumers each year, report extensively on marketplace issues, and advocate for consumer rights and protections around safety, digital rights, financial fairness, and sustainability. CR is independent and nonprofit.