

Energy Efficiency

The Problem for Consumers

As utility bills rise across the country, energy efficiency remains one of the most effective and lowest-cost tools states and the federal government have to help families save money every month. More than one in four Americans already face high energy burdens, spending over 6% of household income on home energy costs.¹ The Department of Energy estimates home and appliance efficiency upgrades can reduce household energy costs by up to 30%.²

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 on a large home appliance (such as a refrigerator or furnace), 73% of Americans said it signals cost savings on energy bills compared to an appliance without the “energy efficient” label.³

Since the late 1980s, national appliance efficiency standards have helped lower utility bills while maintaining product quality and reducing emissions. While many of these standards are currently under attack at the federal level, states have the power to provide a backstop and set standards when the federal government fails to do so.⁴

State and utility energy efficiency programs can also help lower the upfront cost of energy efficiency investments for households, increasing their savings. When these programs are effectively targeted at residents with a high energy burden, these programs can often lower overall program costs, by lowering the cost of energy assistance programs.

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.

- **Proven Consumer Savings:** Federal efficiency standards saved consumers more than \$100 billion in 2024 alone.⁵

¹ American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE): [Energy Burden Research](#)

² U.S. Department of Energy: [Energy Saver 101: Home Energy Audits](#)

³ Consumer Reports: [March 2025 American Experiences Survey](#)

⁴ Appliance Standards Awareness Project (ASAP): [State Standards](#)

⁵ U.S. Department of Energy: [Appliance and Equipment Standards Program](#)

- **Grid Reliability Benefits:** Efficient appliances reduce electricity demand and help ease pressure on aging electric grids.
- **Water Savings:** ENERGY STAR appliances and WaterSense fixtures can save households more than \$380 annually on water and energy costs.⁶
- **Health and Environmental Benefits:** Efficiency standards reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions while improving indoor comfort and resilience.⁷

Consumer Reports' Positions

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

Consumer Reports urges policymakers to:

- Support state appliance efficiency standards and federal standards backstops
- Support state and utility energy efficiency programs and rebates
- Expand consumer awareness of energy efficiency programs available in your state

CR is partnering with the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) to raise public awareness of the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates (HEAR) and Home Efficiency Rebates (HOMES) that are available in each state.

Contact

For more information on any of our work on appliance efficiency standards, please contact Chris Harto at chris.harto@consumer.org and Sara Enright at sara.enright@consumer.org.

⁶ EPA: [WaterSense Statistics and Facts](#)

⁷ US Dept of Energy: [Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#)

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.