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HOUSE OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENERGY POLICY, AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
HEARING ON “CONSUMER CHOICE ON THE BACKBURNER: EXAMINING THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION’S  
REGULATORY ASSAULT ON AMERICANS’ GAS STOVES”

May 24, 2023

Chairman Fallon, Ranking Member Bush, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Andrew deLaski and I am the Executive Director of the Appliance Standards Awareness Project (ASAP). ASAP works to advance appliance, equipment, and lighting efficiency standards that save money for households, particularly low- and moderate income households, as well as cut air pollution, planet-warming emissions, and water waste. ASAP is housed within the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization focused on leading and advancing energy efficiency policies, programs and technologies across the nation.

I’d like to make three points on the importance of appliance efficiency standards before turning to the proposed stove standards.

**First, efficiency standards save consumers money and protect consumer choice.** Federal appliance standards are a money-saver for American households. As a result of standards in effect today, the average American household saves roughly \$500 on annual utility bills.<sup>1</sup> The program was designed to ensure that consumers see cost savings across a wide variety of appliances and equipment. By law, the Department of Energy (DOE) must periodically revisit and update standards to reduce energy costs and emissions across appliances. The law also requires DOE to ensure that consumers continue to have access to product choices they value. Contrary to recent misinformation, DOE is expressly prohibited from eliminating categories of products that use a particular fuel type and has not proposed any standard that would do that.

Robust energy efficiency standards help reduce the energy bills of low- and moderate-income Americans, who spend a disproportionate share of their income on energy bills. Low- and moderate-income households tend to benefit the most from energy efficiency standards because they are often renters, with little control over the energy efficiency of appliances purchased by their landlords. Equally important, standards ensure that manufacturers include energy saving innovations throughout their product offerings, including their basic, low price point models. That benefits low- and moderate-income appliance purchasers.

For example, a new refrigerator today uses 75% less electricity on average than one from the 1970s yet it is 20% bigger and is more likely to have features like through-the-door water and ice service. New clothes washers use 70% less energy than models from the early 1990s and have 50% more tub capacity,

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew deLaski and Joanna Mauer, “Energy Saving States of America: How Every State Benefits from National Appliance Standards.” ASAP Appliance Standards Awareness Project, February 2017, <https://appliance-standards.org/document/white-paper-overview>.

meaning more laundry can be washed per load. In real dollars, these appliances have gotten cheaper over time. These enormous improvements in efficiency and the choices available to consumers have been driven in large part by a series of efficiency standards enacted by Congress and adopted by DOE. And, they have resulted in lower utility bills for all households. Despite this progress, the technology—for refrigerators and for other products—has continued to improve. The Department of Energy is now in the process of updating standards to catch up with that progress.

**Second, efficiency standards enhance U.S. energy security.** The federal appliance standards program is a strategy to boost energy security that dates back to the aftermath of the energy crisis of the late 1970s. Energy efficiency standards bolster our nation’s energy security and independence by freeing up critical natural gas, oil, and electricity supplies and reducing the need for imported fuels. In addition, by reducing peak electricity and natural gas demand, standards make our energy systems more robust and resilient.

**Third, there is bipartisan support for energy efficiency standards.** Recent polling published from Morning Consult demonstrates the strength of American public support for standards.<sup>2</sup> Three in five adults support strengthened standards including a supermajority of Democrats (73%) and a plurality of Republicans (48%). Polling over more than a decade shows very durable public support for efficiency standards.

This Administration has been working toward its statutory requirement to finalize more than 40 standards due by 2025, including many that are long overdue. Once finalized, these standards are poised to save an additional \$570 billion and avert 2.4 billion metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on a cumulative basis according to the administration.<sup>3</sup> We estimate that the typical household could save nearly \$350 annually once upgraded standards are implemented and compliant products become the norm.<sup>4</sup>

With respect to gas stoves, let me be clear: **there is no ban on gas stoves** - this argument is a red herring. DOE does not have the statutory authority to ban gas stoves and has not made any such proposal. DOE does have a statutory obligation to review and update all standards. If the proposed standard is finalized, consumers would continue to have a wide variety of gas stove models from which to choose.

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<sup>2</sup>Martinez, Julia. “Attitudes on Natural Gas Bans Remain Stable.” Morning Consult Pro, April 26, 2023. <https://pro.morningconsult.com/instant-intel/natural-gas-bans-energy-efficiency>.

<sup>3</sup> “Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Takes More than 100 Actions in 2022 to Strengthen Energy Efficiency Standards and Save Families Money,” The White House, December 19, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/19/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-takes-more-than-100-actions-in-2022-to-strengthen-energy-efficiency-standards-and-save-families-money/>.

<sup>4</sup> Joanna Mauer and Andrew deLaski, “Report Overview - a Powerful Priority: How Appliance Standards Can Help Meet U.S. Climate Goals and Save Consumers Money,” ASAP Appliance Standards Awareness Project, November 17, 2020, <https://appliance-standards.org/document/report-overview-powerful-priority-how-appliance-standards-can-help-meet-us-climate-goals>.

**The proposed efficiency standard for gas stoves would benefit consumers.** About half the gas stove models sold today already meet the proposed standard. Others, primarily the luxury, commercial- style models, would require modest improvements, resulting in about a 30% reduction in energy use to do the same amount of cooking. That will both save consumers money and improve public health outcomes.

These modest energy efficiency improvements and others for electric cooking products will add up over time, resulting in up to \$1.7 billion in savings for consumers. The Consumer Federation of America, which supports the proposed efficiency standard, issued the following supportive statement:

While it has taken decades, the venerable stove is finally on the path to getting money-saving, performance-based efficiency standards. DOE's proposal would save Americans \$1.7 billion over the years ahead, move us toward cleaner air, and improve the least efficient stoves on the market today. Our surveys over the past decade show that consumers overwhelmingly want more energy-efficient appliances and strongly support stronger federal standards. In addition, they understand that energy prices will continue to be volatile, as the last year has clearly demonstrated. Rigorous future standards will be critical to protecting consumer pocketbooks and continuing an aggressive effort to address climate change.<sup>5</sup>

By law, DOE must adopt the maximum improved standard that is technologically feasible and economically justified. A final rule for stove standards is six years overdue, and as part of a settlement agreement, DOE must finalize new standards by January 31, 2024. If finalized, the proposed rule would take effect in 2027, providing manufacturers with significant time to modernize designs as needed.

In conclusion, energy efficiency standards for household appliances and commercial equipment have been a cost-saving feature of American energy policy for decades. The DOE should expeditiously finalize strong energy efficiency standards to secure real cost and energy savings – and long-term energy security – for the American people.

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<sup>5</sup>"Proposed Boost to Stove Efficiency Garners Public Support," Appliance Standards Awareness Project, April 17, 2023, <https://appliance-standards.org/document/proposed-boost-stove-efficiency-garners-public-support>