

Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
H.R. __, the EPS Improvement Act of 2016
January 12, 2016

(As Prepared for Delivery)

The Obama administration Department of Energy has enacted 34 energy conservation standards since 2009. Many of these standards are not perfect and contain flaws that need to be corrected. We have included a few such bipartisan corrections in our recent energy bill, and today we address another one affecting light emitting diodes, or LEDs. I thank my colleagues Renee Ellmers and Diana DeGette for their draft bill that would address this issue and benefit both the manufacturers and users of these products.

By way of background, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 required DOE to set energy conservation standards for external power supplies, such as the ones we use to plug in our laptops and cell phones, but DOE also included devices that power solid state lighting products, also known as LEDs, for purposes of regulation. The latest standards will take effect next month. However, the statutory definition of an external power supply was created back in 2005, and this old language did not anticipate the subsequent development of LEDs.

LED systems contain components that DOE has determined fit within the broad definition of an external power supply, but in reality these lighting technologies have several unique characteristics that make compliance with DOE's new standard nearly impossible. I might add that LEDs have many advantages, so a DOE rule that makes it harder to produce them would be counterproductive to the statute's efficiency goals.

The EPS Improvement Act of 2016 scales back the external power supply rule in order to preserve the market for LED products. While keeping the efficiency standard in place for most external power supplies, it creates a specific exemption for LEDs. In addition, the law authorizes DOE to enact a subsequent, more appropriate standard targeting LEDs if the agency deems it necessary.

Manufacturers and energy efficiency advocates agree that this change makes sense, and we will hear from representatives of both groups today.

Let's kick off 2016 by making one DOE regulation more workable for those who make their livelihoods from LEDs as well as those who use them.

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