

**Statement of Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr.
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Energy
Hearing on “Wasted Energy: DOE’s Inaction on Efficiency
Standards & Its Impact on Consumers and the Climate”**

March 7, 2019

Today we are here to find out why the Department of Energy (DOE) is dragging its feet in implementing energy efficiency standards that will save consumers money and help combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

For years, promoting energy efficiency was a bipartisan issue. During the Obama Administration, DOE finalized 50 new product efficiency standards. Many of these new standards stemmed from energy bills this Committee passed on a bipartisan basis and were then signed into law by President Bush

in 2005 and 2007. In fact, Ranking Member Upton played a leading role in that 2007 effort and we are all benefiting as a result of that bipartisan work.

Sadly, the progress on this important program came to a grinding halt when President Trump was inaugurated. Since then, DOE has made a conscious choice to ignore the law by refusing to finalize or update efficiency standards for 16 products, including refrigerators, washing machines and room air conditioners. Even more egregious – the Trump Administration refuses to publish in the Federal Register four efficiency standards finalized in December 2016. These standards were complete and awaiting official publication, but DOE refused to follow the law and follow through.

And then, last month, DOE announced that it was completely discarding a significant update to lightbulb efficiency standards finalized in January 2017. Those standards expanded existing lightbulb efficiency guidelines to include a broader range of lightbulb sizes, such as candelabra and cone-shaped bulbs. Trashing this significant standard will allow inefficient products to remain on the market and increase consumers' electricity bills.

DOE also released a revised Process Rule, which guides how DOE sets appliance efficiency standards. The new rule makes it harder to update efficiency standards. It does this by cooking the economic analysis for new standards so that costs are taken into greater account while narrowing the scope of benefits that DOE will consider. It also allows manufacturers to

use their own test procedures to verify a product's energy usage. That's a terrible idea. Haven't we learned anything from the Volkswagen emissions test cheating scandal?

Even worse, it's clear from publicly-available documents that political staff at the Office of Management and Budget intervened to make it nearly impossible for DOE to deviate from this new process -- even when sticking to the process would conflict with legal mandates.

But, most egregious is the fact that this Administration spent the last two years writing proposals that weaken efficiency standards, while completely disregarding the law's mandate to update or finalize efficiency standards for 16 products. While I may have issues with this new Process Rule, I don't have a

problem with trying to make the process more efficient. But when the law says you need to take a specific action, the Department's job is to carry out the law, not go off and do whatever it wants. I hope that's something all Members of this Committee can agree on.

Today all of us who care about the issue of climate change have a chance to condemn DOE's delays. National energy efficiency standards for appliances are one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the program has resulted in three billion tons of avoided emissions since its inception.

Every day the Administration delays updating efficiency standards for these common household products, consumers

electricity bills remain higher than necessary, and more electricity is unnecessarily generated to power these less efficient appliances. These delays must come to an end.