

Opening Statement of Republican Leader Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy Hearing
“Wasted Energy: DOE’s Inaction on Efficiency Standards & Its Impact on
Consumers and the Climate”
March 7, 2019
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing to continue our oversight of the Department of Energy’s successful Appliance and Equipment Standards Program. I look forward to hearing from Assistant Secretary Daniel Simmons, who leads the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, which carries out this program.

In addition to energy efficiency standards, EERE has an important responsibility to manage and invest billions of dollars in cutting edge research and development, to encourage innovation and drive the transition to a clean energy economy. While this isn’t a budget hearing, there have been leaked reports about EERE’s FY 20 budget proposal. I am not going to comment on the leak, but I want to state for the record that we expect EERE to carry out the law as Congress intended, and utilize the resources that Congress provides.

Since the mid-1980's DOE has established successive rounds of efficiency standards for a wide variety of household and industrial products, such as air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, clothes dryers, furnaces, ovens, dishwashers, water heaters, and light bulbs.

I believe DOE's efficiency standards have served as one of the nation's most effective policies for reducing energy use. Efficiency standards have also contributed greatly toward reducing our carbon emissions and environmental impacts, strengthening our energy security, and providing consumers with significant cost-savings.

If we are going to have serious, solutions-oriented discussions about how to address climate change risks, as I believe we should, then we must acknowledge the historical progress we've made with DOE's efficiency program. We must also recognize the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead and remove regulatory barriers to new technological innovations and efficiency gains.

The Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975, known as EPCA, established the first Federal energy efficiency program, consisting of consumer product testing procedures, labeling, and energy efficiency targets.

Over the years, Congress amended EPCA and passed new laws, setting prescriptive standards for certain products and directing DOE to establish new standards via rulemaking for other categories of products.

For home appliances, Congress requires DOE to conduct a “six-year lookback” where DOE must publish a new standard, or publish a determination that one isn’t necessary. Congress also requires DOE to maintain a multi-year schedule to regularly review and update all standards and test procedures.

It’s long past time that Congress re-examine EPCA to see if there are ways to modernize the 40-year-old statute to improve DOE’s Appliance Standards Program.

While DOE seems to be doing what it can Administratively, with the long-awaited update to its “Process Rule” for standard setting, it is up to Congress to review the law and make changes when appropriate.

With that, I look forward to the hearing today and I yield the remainder of my time to Mr. Latta, who has taken a lead role over the last several years on bi-partisan EPCA modernization.