

Chairman Robert Latta
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Energy
“Building the American Dream: Examining Affordability, Choice, and Security in
Appliance and Buildings Policies.”
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Welcome to today’s hearing, “Building the American Dream: Examining Affordability, Choice, and Security in Appliance and Buildings Policies.” Thank you to our witnesses for your participation.

Today, we will discuss policies that have raised energy and product prices for American families and business owners, put home ownership out of reach, and jeopardized grid reliability.

Many of these policies have been implemented in the name of energy efficiency. But, the forced electrification from the Left does not equate to increased energy efficiency, and it ignores affordability and consumer choice.

Energy conservation will play an important role in meeting our nation’s growing energy demand, however, consumer choice, affordability, and innovation must be prioritized in the execution of those goals.

Over the last decade, it has become apparent that the statutory process for energy efficiency standards is broken. We must reform the process to restore consumer choice, appliance affordability, and true energy savings as the foundation of DOE’s Appliance and Equipment Standards Program.

Everyone here supports true energy efficiency and the benefits it yields for our constituents. However, over the last several years, the focus has clearly strayed from enhancing efficiencies and realizing cost savings.

This misdirection has gone well beyond DOE’s energy conservation standards-- we have also seen a misalignment of priorities in building codes, performance standards, and state local restrictions on the use of fossil fuels.

Nowhere is that more reflected than in the cost of homes. Over the last 15 years, home prices have steadily increased, putting the dream of home ownership out of reach for millions of Americans.

Today, more than 80 percent of adults in the United States say housing affordability is a problem in the city or county where they live, and homeowners now spend 34 percent more on household appliances in 2010. While there are a variety of factors that have contributed to these rising costs, we cannot ignore the impact that misguided policies have had.

The Biden administration tied Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding to the forced adoption of the 2021 model energy codes, which restricted the use of gas and promoted electrification even if it was not an appropriate choice for consumers. This was done despite their own data that showed homes with natural gas hookups are over 3 times more affordable than electric options.

But the Biden administration didn't stop there. DOE issued a rule to eliminate the use of fossil fuel in all new and modified federal buildings in 2030. This would have included military installations and housing, some residential buildings, and sites of critical national security importance—like the Pentagon.

Not only would this compromise our security, the rule would also have actually **increased** energy usage and added further strain to our nation's electric grid. We must strike a healthy balance between utilizing affordable energy and implementing commonsense, effective energy conservation measures.

Again, I thank our witnesses for their participation today and look forward to hearing their perspectives.

Thank you, and I yield back.