

Statement of Chair Bobby Rush (as prepared for delivery)
Hearing on “Wasted Energy: DOE’s Inaction on Efficiency Standards & Its Impact on Consumers and the Climate”
E&C Subcommittee on Energy

March 7, 2019

Good morning, I would like to thank all of our invited guests for being here today to testify at today’s hearing entitled: “Wasted Energy: DOE’s Inaction on Efficiency Standards & Its Impact on Consumers and the Climate.”

As we are all aware, federal efficiency standards conserve energy, create jobs, encourage American ingenuity and innovation, all while helping domestic manufacturers stay competitive in a global market.

The efficiency sector currently employs 2.25 million Americans, more jobs than all fossil fuel sectors combined, and there are currently over 315,000 manufacturing workers employed in this sector, an increase of nearly 10 percent in 2017.

Additionally, studies have shown that energy efficiency jobs are the fastest growing in the entire energy sector, with an additional 133,000 new jobs created in 2017 alone.

However, under the Trump Administration, DOE has not only failed to publish its legally-mandated efficiency standards but has instead proposed to take the country backwards by recently announcing two proposals that would negatively impact consumers, the public health, employment, and the environment.

Full Committee Chairman Pallone, Oversight Subcommittee Chairwoman DeGette, and I wrote letters to DOE on two occasions, November 1st of last year and again last month on February 5th, requesting information on these delayed standards and a timeline for when the agency expects to take action on them.

Instead of providing us with direct answers to our straight-forward requests, the agency has once again shown what I consider to be contempt for the role of Congress by directing us to hyperlinks that could be found on Google search.

Let me be crystal clear, DOE’s failure to update the 16 appliance and equipment standards that were adopted and finalized during the Obama Administration, violates its statutory obligations under Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA).

What’s more, this failure to publish new standards will disproportionately harm low-income Americans, who are more likely to be renters, and therefore, would save money on monthly utility bills when outdated appliances are replaced with more efficient ones.

This failure to follow the law, which was enacted on a bipartisan basis under George W. Bush, could potentially cost consumers billions of dollars in higher energy bills, while also creating uncertainty for domestic manufacturers.

Yet instead of working on its legally-mandated responsibilities, just last month, DOE announced a new proposal to narrow the scope of energy efficiency standards for lightbulbs, which would set higher efficiency levels for nearly three billion sockets in American homes.

These Obama-era standards were projected to save consumers approximately \$665 billion through 2050.

This reversal makes absolutely no sense when you consider the fact that these efficiency standards are responsible for sparking innovative designs that have decreased costs, created jobs, and helped domestic manufacturers be more competitive in the global market.

In addition to rolling back lightbulb standards, the agency also issued a separate proposal to change its “process rule,” making it more difficult for DOE to update new energy efficiency standards for any product in the future, including refrigerators, hot water heaters, or air conditioners.

DOE’s failure to follow its Congressional mandate, along with its shortsighted proposals, will slow down progress and compromise the highly successful standards program that has helped save the average family over \$500, annually, off their energy bills.

So, I look forward to hearing from today’s witnesses on these important issues, and now I would like to recognize my good friend and the Ranking Member from the state of Michigan, Mr. Upton for his opening statement.

###