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Latest DOE Actions on Appliance Standards Will Cost Consumers and Increase Carbon Emissions

(July 11, 2019) – Today, the Department of Energy (DOE) reversed course and sided with the gas industry, at the expense of consumers, by indicating it plans to ignore energy-efficient condensing technology when developing future efficiency standards for gas furnaces and water heaters.

This decision is the latest in a series of DOE actions that undermine US appliance standards which save huge amounts of energy, lower bills for consumers and businesses, and reduce harmful pollution. **In addition to this rule, DOE is also [in the process of weakening national dishwasher standards](#), [rolling back the light bulb standards](#), and providing a pathway for [manufacturers](#) to exempt themselves from product testing requirements.**

Today's ruling deals with efficient, condensing furnaces and water heaters that capture additional heat from the flue gases. **A [report from the Appliance Standards Awareness Project \(ASAP\)](#) found that condensing technology has the potential to save consumers and businesses over \$100 billion on their utility bills by 2050.**

The gas industry has argued for years that these more efficient units should be a separate product class, so manufacturers can continue selling wasteful, outdated models. Although DOE has disagreed with the gas industry's argument [as recently as 2016](#), it is now reversing its decision to side with the gas industry.

[Steven Nadel](#), Executive Director, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE):

“Condensing technology can reduce the energy use of products such as gas furnaces and water heaters by about 10-20%. The gas industry has sought to eliminate DOE's consideration of condensing technology since at least the early 2000s, but until now, DOE, under both Bush and Obama administrations, had repeatedly rejected the gas industry's arguments.”

Gas Furnaces and Water Heaters

The first [proposed rule](#), published today, would benefit the gas industry at the expense of American consumers. **This new rule, issued in response to a petition from the gas industry, would allow DOE to ignore condensing technology when developing future efficiency standards — creating a loophole for the industry to sell wasteful, outdated models.**

Dishwasher Decision Pending

The second pending, [proposed rule](#) on dishwashers grants a petition from the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), a DC-based advocacy group. This plan is opposed by both manufacturers and energy efficiency advocates. The proposed rule would create a new product class for dishwashers with a cycle time of less than one hour.

CEI's request is unwarranted because **dishwashers that meet current standards and have the option of a short cycle are already widely available on the market.** Dishwasher manufacturers today are providing consumers with wide-ranging choices of quiet, efficient machines that provide excellent washing performance while also providing the option of a short cycle.

It appears that the DOE will approve this new class of dishwashers in the coming weeks and assert that current standards on energy and water use will not apply to them. This move runs aground of the anti-backsliding law that prevents the weakening of appliance efficiency standards. If less-efficient dishwashers go to market, consumers will pay higher prices on their energy and water bills as a result.

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[The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy \(ACEEE\)](#) acts as a catalyst to advance energy efficiency policies, programs, technologies, investments, and behaviors.

[The Appliance Standards Awareness Project \(ASAP\)](#) organizes and leads a broad-based coalition effort that works to advance, win, and defend new appliance, equipment, and lighting standards which deliver large energy and water savings, monetary savings, and environmental benefits.