

APPLIANCE STANDARDS MOVE INTO THE LIMELIGHT

In a speech at the Department of Energy on February 5, 2009, President Obama put appliance efficiency standards front and center on the nation's energy agenda. He signed a Presidential Memorandum ordering the department to complete five efficiency rules subject to legal deadlines by August 8th and work to complete standards due after August 8th ahead of schedule, especially those with the largest potential savings for consumers.

As Obama declared his commitment to accelerating DOE's standard-setting schedule, he touted the enormous benefits of the program.

"We'll save through these simple steps over the next 30 years the amount of energy produced over a two-year period by all the coal-fired power plants in America. This will save consumers money, this will spur innovation and this will conserve tremendous amounts of energy."

Background information provided by the administration notes that implementation of the standards would represent an estimated savings to Americans of more than \$500 billion in electric bills over 30 years. The administration touts new standards, "[They] spur more investment in energy efficiency and pay for themselves many times over. It's a win for consumers, a win for the economy and a win for the environment."

By August 8th, DOE must issue federally mandated standards for microwave ovens, gas ovens and stoves, linear fluorescent lamps (i.e. 4 ft and 8ft light bulbs), incandescent reflector lamps (the light bulbs used in recessed can light fixtures), beverage vending machines, certain types of commercial air conditioners and commercial boilers.

President Obama's commitment to meet and beat the legal deadlines for new standards is a hugely important break with the past. His predecessors fell behind on updates for some 22 standards. Even more importantly, the President has brought the importance of energy saving appliance standards into focus as part of a strategy to make America more energy efficient.

Now, we are turning to the important work of ensuring that the new standards will be strong - that's where the significant energy savings can be realized. Here are two examples:

Lamps: DOE must issue new standards for fluorescent tube light bulbs and reflector light bulbs by June 30, 2009. If strong, these standards could save about 60 billion kilowatt hours per year by 2020 -- enough to meet the annual needs of about 5 million households. But the proposal put out by DOE just before President Obama took office

sacrifices about half those savings. It is both too weak and creates a big loophole, leaving some of the most common reflector lamp types out (e.g. 65 watt BR lamps).

Home furnaces: This is not one of the standards President Obama is committing to address, but huge in terms of energy savings. President Bush's standard, issued in fall 2007, saves almost no energy since 99% of sales already comply. Consumer and environmental groups and states have sued to force reconsideration of the weak standard. Obama could accept the need to revisit this standard by settling that suit.

For more information on President Obama's appliance standards memorandum and speech, refer to the following resources:

Links to articles: NY Times, USA Today, Reuters, Associated Press, Wall Street Journal

[President Signs Bill Setting Appliance Energy Standards - New York Times](#)
[Obama wants home appliances to be more energy-efficient - USATODAY.com](#)
[Obama wants appliances to use less energy | Reuters](#)
[The Associated Press: Obama ordering energy-efficient standards](#)
[Obama Mandates New Appliance-Efficiency Standards - WSJ.com](#)

Link to video clip of speech

[Department of Energy - News 2009](#)

Text of speech at DOE:

http://www.energy.gov/news2009/documents2009/President_Obama_DOE.pdf

Presidential memorandum:

[The White House - Press Office - Appliance Efficiency Standards](#)

White House blog:

[The White House - Blog Post - Serious about energy independence](#)

Department of Energy Standards home page

[Building Technologies Program: Appliances and Commercial Equipment Standards](#)