

Northeast Energy Efficiency Standards Project

- Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group •
- Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships, Inc. •
- Environment Northeast • Appliance Standards Awareness Project •
- National Consumer Law Center •

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Legislature's Energy Committee Passes Efficiency Bill Consumers, Businesses Projected to Save \$1.5 Billion by 2020

BOSTON, Feb. 4, 2004 – At a hearing yesterday in the State House, the legislature's Joint Committee on Energy issued a favorable report on a bill that would save consumers and businesses in the Commonwealth \$1.5 billion by 2020 through the adoption of new energy efficiency standards for nine commonly used products. A similar bill was passed recently by the Maryland legislature, and seven other states throughout the Northeast are also considering the legislation.

The bill would set minimum efficiency standards for everyday products that currently waste large amounts of electricity, such as traffic lights, exit signs, cable boxes, and six other commercial or residential appliances. In addition to the dollar savings on electricity bills, the legislation would also reduce the need for electricity in the future, enough to displace the need for a mid-sized new power plant.

"The Energy Committee deserves thanks from anyone who pays an electricity bill," said Frank Gorke, Energy Advocate for the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group. "This legislation provides a reasonable, effective way to reduce electricity bills while also protecting the environment and enhancing reliability of the electricity grid."

Currently there are federal efficiency standards for a number of products on the market, like refrigerators and air conditioners. But the federal program has not kept pace with technology, so several states are taking the lead and considering bills that would set state standards for products not currently regulated. A federal court recently struck down an attempt by Bush administration officials to weaken existing air conditioner standards.

"Going back nearly 20 years, the Massachusetts legislature has been a leader in supporting public policies for energy efficiency," noted Susan Coakley, executive director of Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships. "In keeping with that tradition, the Energy Committee today showed its commitment to the people of the Commonwealth by supporting a policy measure that saves energy, boosts our economy, shores up our electricity grid and protects our environment."

State Rep. Paul Demakis of Boston is the original sponsor of the legislation. House Chairman John Binienda of Worcester, Senate Chairman Robert O'Leary representing the Cape and Islands, and committee members Rep. Matthew Patrick of Falmouth and Rep. James Marzilli of Arlington led the effort to pass the bill. It will now likely be referred to other committees in the legislature.

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