

Northeast Energy Efficiency Standards Project

- New Jersey Public Interest Research Group •
- Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships, Inc. •
- Natural Resources Defense Council • Appliance Standards Awareness Project •
- National Consumer Law Center • Environment-Northeast

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New Jersey Assembly Passes Efficiency Standards Bill

Legislation Projected to Save Consumers Almost \$900 million by 2020

Trenton, New Jersey, June 28, 2004 – The New Jersey State Assembly overwhelmingly approved passage of a bill that would save consumers and businesses in New Jersey almost \$900 million by 2020 through the adoption of new energy efficiency standards for eight commonly used products. A similar measure was adopted recently by Maryland and Connecticut, and is currently pending in four other states throughout the Northeast.

The bill, A 516, would set minimum efficiency standards for everyday products that currently waste large amounts of electricity, such as traffic lights, exit signs, and other commercial or residential appliances. In addition to the dollar savings on electricity bills, the legislation would also result in the reduction of nearly 175,000 metric tons of carbon by 2020, which equates to the annual emissions of 140,000 cars.

"In all the discussions over New Jersey's energy future, the Assembly energy bill is the clearest statement on meeting the needs of energy consumers while protecting our environment and ensuring energy independence," said Emily Rusch, environmental advocate for the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group, one of six groups comprising the Northeast States Energy Efficiency Standards Project, which is advocating for the adoption of similar standards in 10 Northeast states from Maine to Maryland.

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.

"A 516 takes into consideration the role that energy efficiency standards can play in New Jersey's energy future," noted Susan Coakley, executive director of Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships. "The Assembly today showed its commitment to the people of New Jersey by supporting a policy measure that saves energy and ratepayer dollars, boosts our economy, shores up our electricity grid and protects our environment."

Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman of **Trenton** is the first prime sponsor of the legislation and led the effort to pass the bill. **Assemblyman Wilfredo Caraballo** of **Newark** chaired the hearing committee. It will now be referred to the Senate, which is expected to take it up when it reconvenes in September.