

The Appliance Standards Improvement Act of 2009

March 17th, 2009

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Energy prices remain a hot news topic and a big concern for consumers. The [Appliance Standards Improvement Act of 2009](#), introduced by Chairman Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) and Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), seeks to strengthen and improve two key Federal programs which help Americans save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices.

S. 598, is the latest of several bills that the Senate Energy Committee will consider this month when it marks-up comprehensive energy legislation. It strengthens and improves two Federal efficiency programs that have a 20-year record of success: the Department of Energy's appliance standards program and the joint DOE-EPA Energy Star program.

DOE's appliance standards program targets the low-end of the efficiency spectrum by establishing national minimum energy efficiency standards for dozens of products. Standards phase out the production and sale of the least efficient models of a product. The Energy Star program, in contrast, targets the high-end of the efficiency spectrum, using labeling and marketing to promote the development and sale of highly efficient products, including major appliances, office equipment, lighting, home electronics and more.

*"These two programs have been among our country's most effective tools for reducing energy demand, helping us all save money and protect the environment," **Bingaman** said. "For more than two decades, they have saved Americans billions of dollars through reduced energy costs. Further improving the efficiency of household and commercial products, which our bill tries to do, remains one of the most cost-effective strategies for further energy savings."*

*"For far too long we've let bureaucracy stand in the way of implementing consensus standards for appliance efficiency that can save consumers money and put us further along the path toward energy security," **Murkowski** said.*

The *Appliance Standards Improvement Act of 2009*:

- Establishes initial minimum energy efficiency for portable light fixtures (table and floor lamps). These new portable light fixture standards alone will significantly reduce national electrical consumption as more efficient lamps are phased-in over the coming years.
- Strengthens the DOE standards and Energy Star programs by establishing procedures to petition DOE to revise its test procedures and standards, and would require DOE to provide a timely response to those petitions.
- Adopts recommendations made by [Consumer Reports](#) and the EPA's Office of Inspector General.
- Directs DOE to complete three studies: 1) on general compliance with the DOE appliance energy standards; 2) on the costs and benefits of requiring direct-current electricity in buildings; and 3) on assessing the use of electric motors and the electric motor market.