

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of**

**Subcommittee on Energy
Ranking Member Kathy Castor**

***Hearing on “Building the American Dream: Examining Affordability, Choice, and Security in
Appliance and Building Policies”***

September 9, 2025

I have been looking forward to this hearing because it provides us with an opportunity to remind Americans that significant savings and tax credits are available if you need to replace a household appliance, AC/heating system or make other home improvements. These savings were intentionally provided in the Inflation Reduction Act that Democrats passed in 2022. The savings were supposed to be available for ten years, but Republicans ended them early to pay for huge tax breaks for billionaires and big corporations in their Big Ugly Bill.

There is still time. If you install a new energy efficient appliance or make home improvements by the end of the year, you could save a whole bunch of money.

In 2023, 3.4 million households saved over \$8 billion from these tax credits. And that doesn't count the reduction in electric bills. Hardworking American families really could use those savings as costs skyrocket.

In Florida, the largest power utility proposed a nearly \$10 billion rate hike, reported to be the highest rate hike request in American history. Across the country, customers are grappling with surging electric bills.

It's clear that Donald Trump and Republicans have broken their promise to lower costs, and their reckless policies are making life more expensive. In addition to cuts in the Big Ugly Bill, Trump Tariffs are causing pain and creating chaos.

And to add insult to injury, Republicans in Congress and the Trump Administration have taken a hatchet to energy efficiency standards. Energy efficiency saves people money. Appliance standards save a household more than \$500 in energy bills each year. Homeowners will save \$15,000 for homes built using the 2021 building codes, compared to old ones.

My neighbors in Florida know firsthand about the importance of building energy codes – they keep people safe in well-insulated houses amid record heat waves, like the one we experienced this summer.

Families and businesses also save money when codes and design standards help their buildings stand up against strong winds and flooding from increasingly intense hurricanes. Strong building codes

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provide insurance companies with greater certainty in high-risk communities, allowing them to offer more affordable insurance policies and saving taxpayers from becoming the insurer of last resort.

Federal codes and standards are developed collaboratively with local officials, builders, manufacturers, industry and consumer representatives. Neither Congress nor the Administration force this on anyone - building codes are adopted and enforced by state and local jurisdictions, not the federal government.

When building codes and appliance standards are not updated, it also hurts America's global competitiveness. Modern standards increase incentives to innovate and protect domestic companies against competition from inferior foreign products.

This committee has heard repeatedly about growing electricity demand, driven by AI data centers. The fastest solution is energy efficiency. By 2040, updated appliance standards could reduce U.S. electricity consumption by 5%. But instead of embracing these savings, Republicans are waging a war on energy efficient appliances – so that Americans can use more electricity on outdated technology, pay inflated costs, and cede the AI race to China.

The President wants to eliminate EPA's Energy Star program – a voluntary tool that provides \$230 in household savings for every \$1 in administrative costs. And nine months into the year, the President is still illegally withholding over \$106 billion at EPA and DOE that Congress appropriated for American families and businesses.

Let's be clear – energy efficiency saves electricity, reduces consumer costs, and increases household comfort, reliability, and resilience.

So, Republicans kill consumer savings, turn a blind eye to the cost of tariffs, take a hatchet to efficiency, and just last week, every Republican on this committee voted to pass the Energy & Water spending bill, which would raise costs for American households. This includes cuts to Weatherization Assistance, which helps working families save \$372 or more every year.

When household electricity prices are up 10%, and 3 in 4 Americans are concerned with their utility bills increasing, we should be making policies that lower costs for hardworking families.

Unfortunately, Republicans are going in the extreme opposite direction – they're proposing to prevent any future regulations on products like dishwashers, washing machines, stoves, or light bulbs. They want to trap Americans with outdated and expensive technologies forever, while the rest of the world moves on without us.

The American people deserve better – they deserve serious policymakers who will advance real policies that make their lives better – not simply boost the bottom lines of polluters and billionaires.

I yield back.