

TESTIMONY OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

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on House Bill 1615

Before the House Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee



Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

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Chairman Matzie, Chairman Marshall, and honorable members of the House Consumer Protection, Technology & Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Representative O'Mara's and Representative Mehaffie's bipartisan Appliance Energy Efficiency Standards legislation, [House Bill 1615, P.N. 1898](#).

My name is Robert Routh, and I am a senior attorney with NRDC (the Natural Resources Defense Council), an international environmental non-profit organization with over three million members and activists. Since 1970, NRDC's lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked across the U.S. and internationally to protect our natural resources, public health, and climate. My job as Pennsylvania Lead for the Climate & Clean Energy Program is to advocate for Pennsylvania laws and policies that reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) and other air pollutants to create an equitable, sustainable, and prosperous clean energy economy.

NRDC strongly supports HB 1615 and urges its swift adoption. Similar legislation providing for minimum energy and water efficiency standards for certain residential and commercial appliances has been enacted in 13 different states over the past five years, and the Commonwealth is ready to share in the air pollution reduction benefits and consumer energy savings experienced by our neighbors. Indeed, HB 1615 would yield enormous cost and GHG savings. Analysis shared by the [Appliance Standards Awareness Project](#) (ASAP) indicates that new appliance standards would provide *annual* utility bill savings to Pennsylvania households and businesses of nearly \$300 million in 2030 and \$600 million in 2040. In addition to these cost savings, the electricity, gas, and water savings would result in a reduction of 384,000 metric tons of Pennsylvania climate pollution in 2030 and a total reduction of over 7.4 million metric tons of CO₂ emissions over the lifetime of measures in place by 2040.

The public health benefits would also be significant. ASAP's analysis found these new standards would curb nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions by 217 tons in 2030 (NO_x is the smog-forming pollutant that triggers asthma and other respiratory ailments). And they would reduce fine particulate emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) by more than 105 tons in 2030 (SO₂ reduces lung function and exacerbates respiratory ailments). In terms of cumulative benefits through 2040,

Pennsylvania would see reductions of over 4,400 tons of NO_x and over 1,700 tons of SO₂ emissions.

HB 1615 would address 15 commercial and residential appliances sold in the Commonwealth that are already on the market, competitively priced, and available to Pennsylvania consumers and businesses today. And in most cases, businesses and consumers would start saving money on day one. Among the 15 appliances, ten have negligible price differences comparing the average sticker price of the more energy efficient model to a less efficient one found on the shelf, four have a payback period of just 1-3 years, and only one appliance in the legislation (commercial ovens) has a payback period greater than 5 years.

And the utility bill savings going forward would be particularly critical for low-income households, who often struggle to pay their energy bills and are too often faced with termination of vital utility services. Moreover, money that would have otherwise gone to purchase energy supplies from out-of-state would stay in Pennsylvania, helping to create more jobs. Updating these appliance standards would not mean people have to change how they currently live. The only change that would occur: when it's time to replace any of the 15 covered appliances, consumers and businesses would simply find more energy efficient options on the market.

HB 1615 represents a common sense and cost-effective approach to help achieve Pennsylvania's climate goals and to make progress on Governor Shapiro's commitment to long-term energy affordability. By enacting this legislation, Pennsylvanians would start to benefit from real cost and carbon savings, and we would lock in a more efficient built environment for decades to come.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this bipartisan proposal.

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