



September 15, 2026

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Senate Energy and Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Senate Energy and Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

The undersigned national health and medical organizations urge you to oppose S. 5338 “Energy Efficiency Reform Act of 2026”, which would effectively gut the federal appliance and equipment efficiency standards program.

For decades, federal efficiency standards have driven technological innovation, reduced energy and water waste and delivered significant public health benefits. By ensuring that appliances and equipment use less energy to provide the same level of performance, these standards help reduce demand for electricity and fossil fuels and cut pollution that directly harms health and contributes to climate change. Combustion appliances such as furnaces and water heaters that burn fuels can emit nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), carbon monoxide, particulate matter and other harmful pollutants. These emissions contribute to regional ozone and particle pollution, worsening local air quality and increasing associated health risks in surrounding communities.

Current law provides a clear framework for the Department of Energy (DOE) to evaluate whether improved energy conservation standards are technologically feasible, economically justified and likely to result in significant energy savings. But if passed, SB 5338 would create significant new obstacles to establishing and updating cost-effective efficiency standards, repeal recently improved standards for gas furnaces and commercial water heaters and grant future administrations expanded authority to weaken or roll back existing standards.

Strong efficiency standards help lower exposure to pollutants linked to asthma, respiratory illness and cardiovascular disease. Efforts to weaken existing standards or make it harder for DOE to update standards would increase pollution, waste energy and delay progress toward healthier environments. At a time when electricity demand is growing rapidly and communities are facing poor air quality, Congress should not make it harder to deploy technologies that help to reduce unnecessary energy and water consumption and pollution.

Energy efficiency, including appliance standards, is a practical, proven and cost-effective tool that has already helped to reduce harmful pollution and emissions, while easing strain on both the electric grid and household budgets. We urge you to oppose SB 5338 and to protect DOE's ability to establish and update strong, cost-effective appliance and equipment efficiency standards that reduce air pollution and improve public health.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

American College of Chest Physicians

American Lung Association

American Public Health Association

International Society for Environmental Epidemiology – North America Chapter

Medical Students for a Sustainable Future

Oncology Advocates United for Climate and Health – International

Physicians for Social Responsibility