

November 23, 2020

President-elect Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear President-Elect Biden,

Energy use in our homes and commercial buildings is responsible for a third of our nation's greenhouse gas emissions as well as more than \$400 billion in energy bills each year, much of it wasted. While new funding and authorizing legislation is needed, concerted action by agencies under existing laws can do much to cut emissions. In addition, improved building efficiency will save households and businesses money, create local jobs, help incorporate renewables into a resilient power grid, and improve health and comfort – especially important for low-income families and communities of color.

We urge you to make an early priority the following key actions agencies can take now under existing law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through building energy efficiency:

1. [Revive appliance efficiency standards](#) (Department of Energy). Appliance standards are the most important federal energy and climate program for buildings – standards already in place will by 2030 reduce carbon dioxide emissions by about 7 billion tons. The next round of standards could save another 1.5 to 3 billion tons by 2050. It is vital to:
 - a. Promptly reverse changes to the Process Improvement Rule to remove hurdles to strong new standards
 - b. Implement the statutory backstop light bulb standards as soon as possible
 - c. Publish standards for residential furnaces and commercial water heaters in 2021
 - d. Expedite at least 40 standards that are due for updates by the end of the 2024, including 28 that are already past due
2. [Ensure new federally assisted housing is efficient](#) (Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Veterans Affairs, and Federal Housing Finance Agency). At least 15% of new homes have federally assisted loans or other federal assistance with energy efficiency criteria that are badly out-of-date. About half of home loans are from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which also are federally regulated, and lack any such threshold to prevent energy waste. The agencies should:
 - a. Update HUD-USDA and VA criteria to the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code, with more than 30% savings, and develop a program to ensure compliance
 - b. Direct Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to apply the same criteria for their loans for new homes
 - c. Complete HUD notices to require energy benchmarking of multifamily public and assisted housing
3. [Set a strong energy efficiency standard for manufactured homes](#) (DOE and HUD). More than 100,000 manufactured homes are shipped each year subject to a federal efficiency

standard last updated in 1994, while DOE has failed to set a standard due in 2011. Most occupants are low-income, and they spend money on energy waste over decades in the homes. The agencies should:

- a. Issue the 2016 draft DOE standard early in 2021, and publish a stronger draft standard as soon as possible
 - b. Strengthen HUD ventilation requirements to ensure better air quality
4. [Issue an executive order on federal buildings](#) (White House). Federal buildings should be leading the way to zero-net-energy and zero carbon new buildings and to deep energy and water retrofits of existing buildings in order to show how to achieve large savings and resilience. Yet climate and energy goals have been dropped and progress has stagnated in recent years. A new executive order can spur federal agencies to meet new goals, increase transparency, and ensure agencies leverage private and innovative financing to achieve greater impact.
5. **Strengthen agency work to drive energy efficiency** (DOE and EPA). Accomplishing the above actions and vital programmatic work will require quickly filling vacancies in understaffed agencies with top experts, especially DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Deployment and market transformation that achieve large energy and carbon savings need new focus and support, especially in building energy codes, building performance standards, integrating smart homes and commercial buildings in a carbon-free electric grid, and EPA's ENERGY STAR program.

Taking these steps will help consumers, the economy, and the environment, and move forward on a path to sustainable homes and commercial buildings that help resolve the climate change crisis.

Sincerely,

Advanced Energy Economy

Alliance to Save Energy

American Council for an Energy-Efficient
Economy

American Institute of Architects

Building Performance Association

California Efficiency + Demand Management
Council

Ceres

Consumer Federation of America

DesignLights Consortium

E4TheFuture

Energy Efficiency Alliance

Environmental and Energy Study Institute

Institute for Market Transformation

Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

National Association of State Energy
Officials

National Consumer Law Center, on behalf of
its low-income clients

North American Insulation Manufacturers
Association

Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships
NRDC

Sierra Club

Southern Alliance for Clean Energy

South-central Partnership for Energy
Efficiency as a Resource

Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance

Southwest Energy Efficiency Project

Union of Concerned Scientists

U.S. Green Building Council

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