Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 11, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

Recent press reports have indicated that your Administration is currently considering a rollback of national appliance efficiency standards adopted by the Clinton Administration before it left office (see Matthew L. Wald, "Clinton Energy-Saving Rules Are Getting a Second Look", the New York Times, March 31, 2001, at A9). We strongly urge you to leave these standards in place.

At a press conference last week, you stated that our nation is "now in an energy crisis" and that is why you have chosen to abandon your campaign promise to curtail carbon pollution, and why you have pressed to open up the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other sensitive public lands to oil and natural gas drilling. If we are indeed in an "energy crisis", as you suggest, then nothing could be more short-sighted or ill-advised than to roll back appliance efficiency standards that reduce America's consumption of energy.

The new standards for clothes washers, water heaters, air conditioners and commercial heating and cooling systems were adopted by the Clinton Administration to implement a key provision of a 1987 law enacted with strong bipartisan support and signed into law by President Reagan. These rules were adopted years after their due date, following an extensive public comment period involving extensive consultation with all stakeholders. Over the next 30 years, these new standards are estimated to eliminate the need to build 91 new 400 megawatt power plans, with the air conditioning standards alone eliminating the need to build 53 new power plants. The final rule will require a 30 percent increase in energy efficiency for these products, putting them in line with other appliance efficiency standards. This level is broadly supported within the clean energy and environmental community, and by many forward-thinking manufacturers. It is good for consumers and good for the environment. Over the next 30 years, the new standards for residential central air conditioners and heat pumps are projected to save enough electricity to light every single home in America for more than 3 years.

The new efficiency standards will:

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- Help address the critical issue of electricity reliability, which is fundamentally caused by demands placed on the nation's electrical grid by air conditioning, heat pumps, and other appliances.

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting in climate change by 38 million metric tons in carbon emission reductions over the next thirty years, equaling the lifetime emissions of 2,600,000 cars;

- Save consumers and businesses more than $19 billion over the next 30 years on their energy bills;

- Reduce air pollution caused by fossil fuel generation. These new standards, combined with other appliance energy efficiency standards issued since 1997 should reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 518 million metric tons, the equivalent of taking 14.7 million cars off the roads.

- Reduce the need to build 91 new 400-megawatt power plants. The residential central air conditioner standards alone will avoid the need for 53 new power plants;

- Avoid additional unnecessary price increases for both electricity and natural gas, which can be particularly burdensome for seniors on fixed incomes and low-income families. DOE estimates that the new standards, in combination with other standards established since 1997 will result in net energy savings to the nation of $27 billion through the year 2030.

We understand that some disgruntled elements in air conditioner manufacturing industry have opposed any meaningful appliance efficiency standards and sought to overturn the rule, either administratively or through the courts. We urge you to reject the pleas of these special interests, and to allow the new efficiency standards to take effect.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Henry Waxman
Member of Congress

David Bonior
Member of Congress

Thomas M. Barrett
Member of Congress

Tom Sawyer
Member of Congress

Jay Inslee
Member of Congress

Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

Bob Filner
Member of Congress

Sander M. Levin
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John Lewis
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Rosa L. DeLauro
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William D. Delahunt
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Anibal Acevedo-Vila
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Eleanor Holmes-Norton
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John Elias Baldacci
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Martin T. Meehan
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Bernard Sanders
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Grace F. Napolitano
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Joseph Crowley
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Betty McCollum
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Howard Berman
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Anna G. Eshoo
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Peter DeFazio
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