

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of**

**Subcommittee on Energy
Ranking Member Kathy Castor**

***Hearing on “Appliance and Building Policies: Restoring the American Dream of Home
Ownership and Consumer Choice”***

September 16, 2025

Today’s hearing is an important reminder that nine months into the year, this Administration and Congressional Republicans have done nothing to lower energy costs. In fact, their actions are causing costs to soar.

Household electricity prices are up 10% this year. 1 in 3 households is cutting back on basic necessities like groceries to afford their energy bills. 3 in 4 Americans are concerned with their utility bills increasing – and they should be. At least 102 gas and electric utilities have either raised or proposed higher rates that will go into effect next year.

Between tariffs and the Trump Administration’s attacks on clean energy projects, costs are already being passed on to American households and small businesses in higher energy prices. Since the passage of their Big Ugly Bill in July, the average cost of U.S. wind and solar power purchase agreements has increased by 4%. Republicans have managed to take one of the cheapest and fastest sources of energy in the United States and make it more expensive.

Unfortunately, rather than working with Democrats to address this challenge, House Republicans have put bills before us today that would trap American families with outdated and expensive technologies, undermine American manufacturers, and force us to use more energy at a time when AI data centers need all the electricity they can get.

This past week, Energy Secretary Wright was in Europe, spreading climate denial, urging our allies to backpedal on their clean energy transition, and hawking U.S. liquified natural gas while China is racing ahead in clean energy technology deployment and exports.

We cannot win the AI competition of the 21st century with energy policies from the 20th century. Unfortunately, House Republicans have no idea how to meet this moment. So today, we’re rehashing old messaging bills, most of which they know will never become law, to try and gaslight the American people into believing that their washing machines and light bulbs are the reason for high energy costs – not bad Republican policy.

I want to dispel some of the misinformation we’ll hear today, so let’s be clear. Energy efficiency saves electricity, reduces consumer costs, and increases household comfort, reliability, and resilience. 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.

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I want to remind Americans that if you are struggling with high energy costs, there are solutions – thanks to the savings provided in the Inflation Reduction Act that Democrats passed in 2022. If you need to replace a household appliance, your AC or heating system, or make other home improvements, you could save thousands of dollars in tax credits if you act before the end of the year. These are real savings – in 2023, 3.4 million households saved over \$8 billion from these tax credits.

Unfortunately, Republicans ended these credits to pay for huge tax breaks for billionaires and big corporations in their Big Ugly Bill – so act quickly before the end of the year to ensure you can access them.

These tax credits can work in tandem with good government policy to save money and make buildings more energy efficient. I'm pleased that today we'll be discussing Rep. Tonko's Weatherization Enhancement and Readiness Act – a bipartisan proposal to reauthorize and update the Weatherization Assistance Program. I'm proud to cosponsor this bill and support the program, which is crucial for my neighbors in Florida trying to save money on their electric bills and make their homes more resilient to dangerous heat waves and hurricanes. I hope my Republican colleagues will consider this bill seriously and advance it through to the full Committee.

Our neighbors back home are counting on our help to make their lives more affordable.

I yield back.