



## Consumer Federation of America

**PRESS RELEASE**

**February 24, 2014**

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### **Digital devices drive electricity demand for U.S., CA households, sapping consumer pocketbooks**

*New analysis finds strengthening energy efficiency standards would save consumer dollars & energy, particularly in CA*

*CFA's Cooper calls on Calif. Energy Commission to move forward with standards*

Washington, D.C. – A new analysis from the Consumer Federation of America ([www.consumerfed.org](http://www.consumerfed.org)) identifies household digital devices as a leading driver of electricity consumption in U.S. and California households. The analysis, [\*Electricity Consumption and Energy Savings Potential of Digital Devices: The Role of California Appliance Standards Leadership\*](#) finds that demand for electricity from computers, monitors, notebooks, game consoles, routers and similar devices is growing at a faster pace than any other category of U.S. household appliances.

“Digital devices are energy guzzlers sapping consumer pocketbooks,” said Mark Cooper, CFA’s Director of Research and author of the report. “Improving the energy efficiency of household digital devices by a third or more would save consumers a lot of money because the reduction in electricity bills would be much larger than the increase in the upfront cost of putting more new more energy efficient technologies in the devices.”

Key findings of the report include:

- Between the years 2000 and 2013, the amount of electricity gobbled up by digital devices increased more than five-fold in the U.S., reaching an average of 800 kWh per year per household.
- Nationally, these devices now consume about half as much energy as air-conditioners and two-thirds as much as refrigerators.
- The impact of digital devices on household energy use is particularly strong in California, where computer and Internet use is higher than the U.S average and air conditioning use is below the national average.
- Substantial, cost-effective improvements in the energy efficiency of consumer digital devices can be achieved through strong performance standards.



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“The California Energy Commission has the authority and obligation to promote energy efficiency, and the Governor made it a priority in his State of the State speech,” Cooper added.

The CFA report points out that California is uniquely positioned to drive the nation forward because of the large size of its consumer market for digital devices and because the state has experience in setting and executing energy efficiency standards that are consumer-friendly but also responsive to industry needs.

“The biggest obstacle to progress has been the consumer electronics industry, which has simultaneously failed to address the problem in the market and opposed standards,” Cooper added.

Just last week, the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA), a trade group representing select business interests, issued a press statement to the American, Canadian, and Mexican presidents, meeting at the Trilateral North American Leaders’ Summit bemoaning the “misalignment” of energy efficiency standards in North America. In the statement, it called for a dialogue around more uniform standards.

“Policy makers should not be fooled by trade groups who tend to make ‘the sky is falling’ claims about the so-called costs of energy efficiency,” said Cooper. “Our report shows that this is what they always say, and they are always wrong.”

“The public posturing by the CEA underscores how important this issue is. CFA would have no problem moving toward more uniform standards, as long as they set a high bar that puts more money in the consumer pocketbook. Unfortunately, the CEA is likely to advocate for a lowest common denominator,” said Cooper.

“In fact, it would be great if California took a leadership role in setting a highest common denominator standard that the rest of the nation and the world could follow. The only way to do that is to launch a full proceeding that forces the industry to put the facts, not their propaganda, on the table,” Cooper said. “The sooner the CEC starts the proceeding, the sooner consumers will start saving money.”

A copy of the report can be downloaded from:  
[www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/CFA-Household-Digital-Device-Electricity-Consumption.pdf](http://www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/CFA-Household-Digital-Device-Electricity-Consumption.pdf)

*The Consumer Federation of America is an association of nearly 300 non-profit consumer groups that, since 1968, has sought to advance the consumer interest through research, education, and advocacy.*