



Consumer Federation of America

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 8, 2011

CONTACT:
Mark Cooper 301-384-2204

NEW SURVEY: AMERICANS WANT APPLIANCE STANDARDS TO DRIVE DOWN THE COST OF HOME ENERGY

*As Home Energy Costs Match Household Gasoline Expenditures, CFA Survey Finds
Consumers Want More Efficient Appliances and Standards*

Washington, DC – A new Consumer Federation of America (CFA) survey has found that the public overwhelmingly believes that improving the energy efficiency of home appliances is critically important and strongly supports appliance efficiency standards. In a report released today, CFA reveals that home energy costs now take an equal bite out of consumers' pocketbooks as gasoline expenditures. And similar to their support for fuel economy standards, Americans want energy efficiency standards for home appliances. With oil prices skyrocketing, reducing home energy costs has become critically important to American consumers.

“As policymakers take up legislation to dramatically increase appliance efficiency standards, they should have no doubt that the public wants energy efficient home appliances and strongly supports the government setting efficiency standards,” said Mark Cooper, CFA Director of Research and author of the report.

The national, random sample survey of 1006 adult Americans surveyed by Opinion Research Corporation from January 13-16, 2011 with a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points, revealed the following:

- Nearly all Americans (95%) think it “beneficial for appliances like refrigerators, clothes washers, and air conditioners to become more energy efficient,” with 78% believing this increased efficiency to be “very beneficial.”
- Nearly all Americans (96%) think improved appliance efficiency is important for personal financial reasons – “lowering your electric bills” – with 80% considering this to be very important. However, large majorities also believe improved appliance efficiency to be important for environmental reasons – because it reduces the nation’s consumption of electricity “to reduce air pollution” (92% important, 77% very important) and “to reduce greenhouse gas emissions” (84% important, 66% very important).
- Substantial majorities also favor improved energy efficiency of appliances even when this increases the purchase price of appliances. This support predictably varies with the payback period: 3 years (79% favor, 35% favor strongly), 5 years (73% favor, 32% favor strongly), and 10 years (60% favor, 29% favor strongly).

- Nearly three-quarters of Americans (72%) support “the government setting minimum energy efficiency standards for appliances,” with strong support from 28%.
- Only about two-thirds of Americans (68%) are aware that the “government requires new appliances like refrigerators, clothes washers, and air conditioners to meet minimum energy standards.”
- Respondents who are aware of the minimum standards are more likely to support them (74% to 64%).

“Expenditures on gasoline receive a great deal of attention from the media and policymakers, but in the last couple of years expenditures for home energy used for air conditioning, heating, lighting, hot water and other purposes take almost as big a bite out of the consumer pocketbook,” Cooper added.

“The public wants to see Washington policy makers to cooperate on positive legislation that advances the consumer and national interests,” Cooper concluded “and when a remarkably broad range of interests, including appliance manufacturers, consumer groups, and efficiency and environmental advocates, support increases in efficiency standards, swift action to raise the standards should be a ‘no brainer’ for Congress.”

CFA’s Report can be found at <http://www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/CFA-Appliance-Efficiency-Report-3-11.pdf>.

The Consumer Federation of America is an association of nearly 300 nonprofit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.