



January 26, 2022

Honorable Jennifer Granholm  
 Secretary  
 U.S. Department of Energy  
 1000 Independence Ave., SW  
 Washington, DC 20585

**Re: Docket Number EERE-2021-BT-STD-0005: General Service Lamps NOPR**

Dear Secretary Granholm:

We are writing in support of the Department’s proposal to implement the backstop standard for light bulbs enacted by Congress in 2007 (86 Federal Register 70755). We agree with the agency’s findings that the law obligates the backstop standard’s implementation and that doing so will save consumers billions of dollars and eliminate millions of tons of climate-harming emissions. Prompt implementation is especially pertinent for low- and moderate-income households since they spend a disproportionate share of their incomes on energy and many lack access to efficient bulbs. Unfortunately, DOE missed

President Biden’s end-of-2021 deadline for completing the rules that will implement this standard. We urge you to promptly finalize these important standards and to forgo delays in their implementation sought by manufacturers.

**DOE has a legal obligation to implement the backstop standard.** As the proposed rule explains, the law requires that DOE implement a 45 lumen-per-watt standard (the “backstop”) for all common light bulbs (“general service lamps” or GSLs) sold in United States if the agency either fails to adhere to specific regulatory steps or fails to issue a standard that would save at least as much as a 45 lumen-per-watt standard. We agree with DOE’s finding that both of those circumstances have occurred and, as a result, “(the) backstop requirement is statutorily prescribed by Congress and no further analysis is required for its implementation.”<sup>1</sup>

**The backstop standard will save consumers money and cut climate emissions.** The backstop’s implementation will complete the phase out of both traditional incandescent and halogen light bulbs in favor of LED bulbs. Even though LEDs have steadily gained popularity and now make up the majority of bulb sales, many manufacturers and retailers choose to continue promoting incandescent bulbs that burn out often, waste money, and harm the climate. An analysis conducted for DOE estimates that implementing the backstop will save consumers about \$2.7 billion on an annualized basis. Reduced electricity consumption from bulbs sold between initial implementation and 2050 will cut climate emissions by 222 million metric tons.<sup>2</sup>

**Prompt implementation is particularly important for reducing energy burdens for low-income households.** As a percentage of income, low-income households spend nearly ten times as much as other households (10.4% of income rather than 1.2%) on energy bills.<sup>3</sup> A 2018 study found that none of the retailers in the poorest areas surveyed that sold light bulbs even stocked LEDs.<sup>4</sup> Yet, retailers that do stock LEDs, which can last 10 years or longer, routinely sell them for less than \$1.50 per bulb in multipacks.<sup>5</sup> Implementing the backstop standard will ensure that all consumers have access to affordable, efficient bulbs, resulting in bill savings that matter most for those with the lowest incomes. An average US household has more than 50 light bulb sockets and will save more than \$200 per year. Households in multi-family or manufactured homes have fewer sockets—about 25 on average—but will still save more than \$100 annually.

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<sup>1</sup> 86 Federal Register 70760 and 70767

<sup>2</sup> Kantner, C.L.S., M. Ganeshalingam, R. Hosbach, L. Zavodivker. “Impact of the EISA 2007 backstop requirement on general service lamps.” Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. December 2021. pp 18-20.

<sup>3</sup> Reames, T. M. Reiner, M.B. Stacey. [“An incandescent truth: Disparities in energy-efficient lighting availability and prices in an urban U.S. county.”](#) *Applied Energy*. May 2018. p 96.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p 101

<sup>5</sup> For example: at Home Depot, <https://www.homedepot.com/p/EcoSmart-60-Watt-Equivalent-A19-Energy-Efficient-E26-Medium-LED-Light-Bulb-Daylight-5000K-8-Pack-FG-04263/318065280>, Jan. 11, 2022 ; and another at Wal-mart, <https://www.walmart.com/ip/Great-Value-9-Year-60-Watt-LED-Light-Bulb-A19-General-Purpose-Lamp-E26-Medium-Base-Non-dimmable-Soft-White-4-Pack/51497369?athbdg=L1600>, Jan. 11, 2022.

**DOE missed President Biden’s deadline; the department needs to act now to avoid any further delay.**

President Biden issued Executive Order 13990 on Inauguration Day which directed agencies to identify harmful rules that had been completed under the prior administration for review and potential reversal by the end of 2021.<sup>6</sup> In response, in February 2021, DOE identified 13 actions, including the one at issue in this rulemaking.<sup>7</sup>

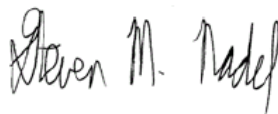
Unfortunately, DOE failed to meet the year-end deadline. Based on typical rulemaking timelines, it now seems likely that a final rule implementing the backstop may not be published until the middle of 2022. This delay is costly. The Appliance Standards Awareness Project estimates that inefficient bulbs sold during just this six-month period will needlessly cost consumers \$1.8 billion dollars in higher utility bills and add nearly 5 million metric tons of climate emissions to the atmosphere. Now, major light bulb manufacturers are asking for another two years of delay—a year to continue making and importing inefficient bulbs and another to sell through inventory accumulated in the first year. Allowance for continued manufacture and sale of inefficient bulbs would benefit light bulb manufacturers at the expense of consumers and the planet.

We strongly urge DOE to finalize and fully implement the backstop standard without further delay. Thank you for considering this input.

Sincerely,



**Andrew deLaski**  
Executive Director  
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**Steve Nadel**  
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<sup>6</sup> Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science To Tackle the Climate Crisis, published at 86 Fed. Reg. 7037. (Jan. 25, 2021) (hereinafter EO 13990) <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-01765>

<sup>7</sup> “Review of Actions of the Prior Administration.” Memorandum from Kelly Speakes-Backman, Acting Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Feb. 19, 2021.

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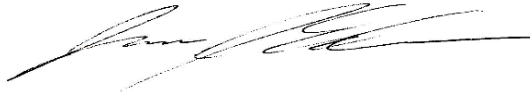
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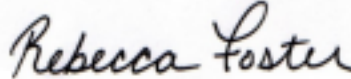
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