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House of Representatives

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Ranking Member Cori Bush

Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs

Hearing on “Cancelling Consumer Choice: Examining the Biden Administration’s Regulatory Assault on Americans’ Home Appliances”

July 18, 2023

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, St. Louis and I are here—for a second time—to discuss the Biden Administration’s regulations to improve the efficiency of gas stoves and now, other household appliances. Since our last hearing on this very topic, the importance of common-sense regulations has not changed. The harmful effects of fossil fuel usage similarly have not changed. The consequences of federal inaction remain dire.

Since we are at yet another hearing about home appliance regulations, I am going to reiterate what we said last time about gas stoves: the Biden-Harris Administration is not banning gas stoves nor is it leading a conspiracy to regulate your appliances out of existence.

This hearing is Republicans playing defense for big oil and gas. We should not be surprised that some of the largest contributors to climate change are for-profit interests opposed to regulations that reduce energy consumption and affect their bottom line.

Those who pay the highest price from regulatory inaction are Black and brown communities. Lawmakers have an obligation to regulate both indoor and outdoor pollution by increasing the energy efficiency of common household appliances. As energy efficient technology evolves, so should our regulatory powers.

The Department of Energy stated that their proposed changes to gas stove energy standards “would save a significant amount of energy” and would “yield significant environmental benefits.” These benefits include lower energy bills, fewer toxic emissions in our air and water, and providing monetary health benefits.

The estimated financial benefits of implementing these rules amounts to over \$130 million in reduced operating costs; nearly \$60 million in climate benefits, and \$94 million in health benefits. Those dividends are just on this single proposal related to stoves and does not account for the benefits of improving energy efficiency standards for dishwashers, refrigerators, washing machines, and other common household appliances.

Republicans enjoy talking about the price of regulation and the cost increases companies and manufacturers may incur to remain DOE compliant. The reality is, the Appliance Standard Programs have saved consumers and businesses billions of dollars. Families and businesses have benefitted for decades from more efficient gas stoves, laundry machines, dishwashers, and light bulbs.

The climate crisis is here, and it is very real. Record heat waves have enveloped the nation this month, and large parts of Missouri have been designated as natural disaster areas due to drought as we speak.

According to Nexus Media, within this decade St. Louis will become two degrees Fahrenheit warmer than it was during the latter half of the 20th Century. This warmer air will lead to more severe rainfall – leading to massive and more regular flooding in the region. Missouri endures both extremes of the climate disaster—parts of my state battle drought, while other parts battle historic flooding.

In 2019, St. Louis's river system reached a historically high level and inundated the area surrounding the Gateway Arch. As these storms and flooding grow more common, it's the low-lying neighborhoods, often populated with Black and brown families, that will bear the brunt of federal inaction.

Despite the frightening reality of climate change – and its very real and visible effects on our communities – my Republican colleagues oppose common sense regulations to curb harmful emissions.

The Biden Administration's rules incentivize the innovations most private sector companies are already pursuing. Some manufacturers are choosing not to protect our health and safety in the interest of short-term profit. By cutting regulatory corners, manufacturers are making it more difficult to protect consumers.

But, the reality is—Republican opposition to basic efficiency standards is entirely new. These pragmatic policies used to be bipartisan. Presidents Reagan, H.W. Bush, and W. Bush all signed efficiency standards for various household appliances into law during their Presidencies.

Today, however, the only regulations Republicans fight for are to restrict access to abortion and children's books. Republicans are fighting tooth and nail to deny vital access to reproductive healthcare and to needlessly regulate classroom learning. And yet, it's not okay to protect the environment, reduce climate change, or improve public health.

The Republican agenda will exacerbate existing health and climate issues. The Biden-Harris Administration's plan, however, will help to ensure a cleaner and healthier future for our children. I want to thank them for their efforts on this front as well as the Department of Energy for protecting our planet.

Thank you, and I yield back.

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