



United States Senate

May 24, 2021

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
United States Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm:

In light of California's recent proposal of new energy-efficient building standards, I write to urge the Department of Energy's Building Technology Office to encourage other states to apply these best practices and prepare the country's building stock for the inevitable transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. California is a leader on this issue and had mandated that 60 percent of our electricity come from renewable sources by 2030, a goal we expect to reach early.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that greenhouse gas emissions from homes and businesses account for 13 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, since 1990, carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide emissions in homes and businesses have increased by 8 percent despite the increasingly widespread use of electric heating and cooking appliances and energy-efficient building materials. The statistics show that simply increasing energy efficiency is not enough to reduce carbon emissions from homes and achieve President Biden's 2030 climate goals.

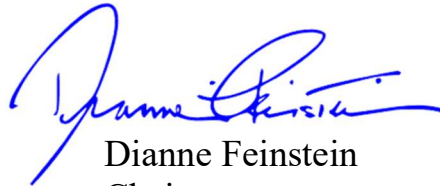
Recent appropriations have provided steady increases for residential buildings, commercial buildings, research and development, and equipment and building standards. As you know, building electrification can be accomplished without compromising energy performance. For example, Congress appropriated \$18,000,000 in Fiscal Year 2021 for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning and refrigeration R&D, including sourced heat pumps, water heaters, and boilers.

Last week, the California Energy Commission proposed new building standards that will incentivize home appliances that would help cut these emissions. The proposed rule requires developers to include dedicated circuits and

panels for electric space and water heating, cooking, clothes dryers, and battery storage. It also includes incentives to install electric appliances; for example, a builder who wants to include gas-fueled water or space heaters would need to offset the increased emissions in other areas, such as high-performance insulation, triple-pane windows, and more efficient water heaters and HVAC units.

I am encouraged that the Department launched its Initiative for Better Energy, Emissions, and Equity recently by allocating \$10,000,000 toward heat pump technologies, and that California is complementing this work to show it is possible to successfully address climate change while improving infrastructure and maintaining economic growth. I urge you to use California's proposed building electrification standards as a model as you discuss the implementation of cleaner building standards with other states nationwide. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Energy and Water Development

CC: The Honorable Gina McCarthy, National Climate Advisor
The Honorable Brenda Mallory, Council on Environmental Quality
The Honorable Katy Kale, General Services Administration
The Honorable Michael Regan, Environmental Protection Agency

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