



## **Final Legislative Report**

### Problem

Commercial and household appliances use too much energy, but switching to energy efficient appliances would mean lower energy costs and a practical change to reduce carbon emissions.

### Summary of bill

Senate House Bill Number 301 in the 2024 session year “Energy Efficiency Standards and Grants for Retrofitting Projects” seeks to set standards for the testing, certification, enforcement of energy efficiency standards. This includes for commercial and household appliances sold, for sale, and installed in Connecticut. This bill is part of the Energy and Technology Committee with several co-sponsors: Senator Julie Kusher, Representative David Micheal, Representative Josh Elliot, Representative Brandon Chafee, and Representative Anne Hughes. These standards come from other administrators like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or state governments like California. Additionally, this bill gives discretion of adding new efficiency standards to Connecticut’s Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection.

This bill leads to change as it pushes violators through fines, inspections by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), and gives ample time to manufacturers to correct these standards. Importantly, this bill grants finances for communities that disproportionately do not have energy efficient appliances.

### Fiscal Implications

SB No. 301 costs money as it creates programs for loans/grants, updating commercial and household appliances through the Housing Environmental Improvement Loan Fund. Further, the bill creates a multi-housing retrofit pilot program with \$75 million which includes \$50 million in bond authority and up to \$20 million for grants. However, the benefits are expected to outweigh the costs as it is believed that moving to energy efficient appliances will lower the energy costs significantly, despite upfront costs.

### Legal Implications

If someone violates these regulations they are subject to a fine of \$250 and each violation is separate as each day continues that it is not within the rules. The bill is proposed for January 1st, 2026. The bill requires DEEP to start several programs to finance homes in environmental justice or alliance communities with a grant of \$20 million. It also regulates inspections for new product distributors and retailers. Moreover, it establishes a process to report violations, though this implication is pretty vague.

### Political Implications

Organizations like Environment Connecticut and the Sierra Club support SB No. 301 because it saves energy, reduces pollution (it is better for the environment). The Connecticut Roundtable on Climate and Jobs supports the bill as it offers grants and loans for low income residents and supports DEEP adding standards. The Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council adds support to the bill as it states that there are multiple barriers to access, but they argue that there should be increased funding. Furthermore, Connecticut Democrats support this bill with many co-sponsoring it.

Although, organizations like Connecticut Realtors, Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut, and Republicans oppose this bill. CT Realtors believe that this

would impact small businesses the most as they may not have the resources to switch to energy efficient appliances and would create a lack of home sales. HBRA states that this would pose an undue burden on housing affordability and accessibility.

### Unintended Consequences

If this bill is passed and implemented it could wind up being unenforced as there are vague requirements like creating a way to report violators. Also, vulnerable populations could be left behind in the transition to energy efficiency as there may not be as much funding like Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council argues for. Moreover, there will probably be a slow transition for product implementation and product standards for two reasons: the bill was proposed almost two years after it was first introduced and there may be opposition from constituents about products especially after the upfront costs.

### Opinion

Yes, SB bill no. 301 should pass because energy efficiency standards are a practical and more accessible way of lowering energy costs and emissions. Additionally, Connecticut will follow other states in implementing other standards like California, so this is a precedent and gives more information on how to implement and what benefits are possible. The proposal for grants and loans is incredibly important because it allows energy efficiency to be more viable and less of a burden to everyone. This idea is an expanded theme in Hannah Ritchie's *Not the End of the World: How We Can Be the First Generation to Build a Sustainable Planet*, as she talks about how the poor and underdeveloped countries cannot be left behind in our effort to reduce climate change.

## References

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