Testimony of the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE)

Before the U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy

Hearing on *"Building the American Dream: Examining Affordability, Choice, and Security in Appliance and Building Policies"*
September 9, 2025

Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Castor, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the record on behalf of the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE).

The BCSE is a coalition of companies and trade associations that deploy a broad portfolio of energy and decarbonization solutions, with a sector focus on energy efficiency, natural gas, and renewable energy. Our members include investor-owned utilities, public power, independent power producers, equipment and product manufacturers, project developers, technology providers, environmental and energy market service firms, and others.

Since its founding in 1992, BCSE has worked to ensure a vibrant, competitive, and sustainable U.S. economy by advocating for policies that advance a wide range of supply- and demand-side technologies. These solutions improve the efficiency, reliability, and affordability of the U.S. energy system. Collectively, BCSE members represent $3.8 trillion in market capitalization and employ nearly one million Americans. BCSE also works closely with its small business division, the Clean Energy Business Network (CEBN), which includes more than 8,000 business and community leaders across all 50 states.

We commend the Subcommittee's focus on energy affordability at a time of growing national energy demand. The most effective way to reduce costs for households and businesses is to expand access to efficient, affordable energy solutions that allow consumers to manage their energy use and lower their bills.

Energy Efficiency Lowers Energy Costs for Families

A 2022 study by ACEEE, the Alliance to Save Energy, and the Business Council for Sustainable Energy documented that energy efficiency is America's most abundant energy resource. While we continue to see rising energy consumption, without the gains in energy efficiency made since 1980, the 2023 U.S. economy would likely have required two-thirds more energy.[1]

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[1] *Alliance to Save Energy, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, and Business Council for Sustainable Energy, Energy Efficiency Impact Report, 2022, https://energyefficiencyimpact.org/.*

By improving the energy efficiency of homes and buildings, families and property owners save money, month after month, year after year. The U.S Department of Energy (DOE) estimated that while the average household spends $2,000 on their annual utility bills, between $200-$400 of this is going to waste from drafts, air leaks, and outdated heating and cooling systems.[2] This is why energy efficiency is so critical to energy affordability. According to ACEEE, using 2023 energy prices, energy efficiency saves Americans approximately $1.4 billion annually.[3]

Building Codes and Consumer Savings

In order to reduce both electric grid overload and intensifying electric grid stress, it is essential that electric loads are reduced cost-effectively. The buildings sector is the largest consumer of electricity and it is always less expensive to save energy than generate electricity from any source.

BCSE has long supported model energy codes as a proven tool to limit energy waste, lower household energy costs, and reduce energy demand. It is essential that these codes remain fuel-neutral, cost-effective, and preserve consumer choice.

The benefits are tangible.

At a local level, the Department of Energy estimates that an Ohio household living in a home built to an updated model code saves over $260 annually on energy costs, reaching positive cash flows in just six years. In Florida, households save an estimated $225 annually, with positive cash flow in only two years.

Model energy codes also deliver resilience benefits. Pacific Northwest National Laboratory research shows that homes built to current codes provide significantly more "days of safety" during outages from extreme weather. For example, during a heat-related event in Atlanta, a code-compliant home provides roughly seven safe days compared to only three in older housing stock. With the residential sector accounting for nearly 20 percent of U.S. primary energy use, these improvements also strengthen national energy security and competitiveness.

Federal Tax Incentives

Federal tax credits have been critical drivers of efficiency investment. The Section 45L New Energy Efficient Home Credit and the Section 25C Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit have spurred construction of efficient new homes and upgrades to existing ones. Unfortunately, both are set to expire under Public Law 119-21. BCSE urges Congress to work with industry to design the next generation of incentives to ensure U.S. housing remains affordable to purchase and to operate.

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[2] "Why Energy Efficiency Matters," U.S. Department of Energy, https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/why-energy-efficiency-matters.

[3] American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), Energy Efficiency Impact Report, 2022, https://energyefficiencyimpact.org; ACEEE, Energy Efficiency Impact Report update (unpublished), September 2025.

Section 433 and Federal Building Standards

BCSE also supports repeal or significant modification of Section 433, which prohibits certain fuels or technologies in federal buildings. In comments submitted to the Department of Energy during its 2023 building performance standard rulemaking, we recommended a holistic, inclusive, and flexible approach. A technology-neutral, whole-building framework will lower costs, improve reliability, security, and resilience, and allow for greater ambition over time.

Conclusion

BCSE appreciates the Committee's leadership in examining policies that reduce costs while enhancing the resilience and reliability of the U.S. energy system. Our members stand ready to work with Congress on pragmatic, bipartisan solutions that make American homes more efficient, affordable, and secure.