



MARYLAND LEAGUE  
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

March 4, 2010

Testimony before the Economic Matters Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates

**HB 349 - Maryland Efficiency Standards Act - Televisions**

Position: FAVORABLE

Maryland PIRG and Maryland LCV request a favorable report of House Bill 349, which would add televisions to the list of products regulated under the Maryland Efficiency Standards Act and give the Maryland Energy Administration the ability to set minimum energy efficiency standards for new televisions.

As population and the demand for energy continue to grow, Maryland is approaching an energy crisis. By 2012, Maryland is projected to experience rolling brownouts and blackouts. In addition to considering new projects to pump more energy into the grid, it is critical that we implement cost-effective measures to reduce our per capita energy consumption. One proven way to accomplish this objective is to make our homes and appliances more energy efficient so that they need less energy to perform the same tasks.

Since the rise in popularity of flat-panel televisions beginning one decade ago, power usage from televisions has more than tripled and now accounts for nearly 10% of residential electricity consumption. Televisions now represent one of the largest household energy consumers. However, technology is widely available to allow new televisions of various screen size and performance to significantly reduce energy usage without sacrificing quality.

This past November, the California Energy Commission implemented rules to create a 50% power savings from TVs beginning in 2013. The ruling was strongly supported by Vizio Inc., one of the leading manufacturers of high-definition flat-panel TVs, and by the LCD TV Association. Both groups have made it clear that the 50% reduction can be achieved using existing and emerging technology. For example, many manufacturers are beginning to implement the use of ambient light sensors, which automatically lower the set brightness in a dark room by decreasing power to the backlight. According to the LCD TV Association, this technology can reduce energy consumption by at least 30%.

Additionally, Vizio Inc. and the LCD TV Association have said that the new standards will have minimal implications on cost. However, any minimal increase in costs will be recuperated by the energy savings from consumers' electric bills. According to the California Energy Commission, new televisions will shave about \$30 per year from electric bills. In terms of energy savings, the California program will save a total of 615 megawatts in the first 8 years, which is enough to offset the production of one gas-fired power plant.

Maryland has been a leader in energy efficiency. In 2004, the legislature passed the Energy Efficiency Standards Act, which applied to 9 appliances and soon became the national standard. In 2007, the legislature and governor passed efficiency standards for 7 more household and commercial appliances and passed the EmPOWER Maryland Act to set Maryland on a path to reducing electricity consumption 15% per capita by 2015.

Energy efficiency programs are the best energy programs to directly benefit the state. First, they save Maryland consumers money by reducing their electricity bill. Second, they are common sense solutions to reduce the demand for electricity, which helps to alleviate transmission congestion and the potential for brownouts and blackouts in coming years.

For these reasons, Maryland PIRG and Maryland LCV request a favorable report of House Bill 349.