



News Release

EESI Executive Director Testifies Before Senate on Energy Efficiency

Tuesday, October 22—[The Environmental and Energy Study Institute](http://www.eesi.org) (EESI)'s Executive Director, Daniel Bresette, testified before Congress on the importance of energy efficiency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create a clean energy economy, promote climate adaptation and resilience, and save Americans money. The hearing, "Energy Efficiency Efforts in the United States and Internationally," was held before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee chaired by Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska).

"The urgency of climate change requires immediate action at home and abroad," said Bresette. "Energy efficiency provides the easiest source of measurable emissions reductions. It is the secret weapon against climate change because we already have what we need to do what we need to do. Every kilowatt and kilowatt-hour saved today will make future commitments easier to attain. The missing piece is the magnitude of our commitment, which falls short of the enormity of the challenge."

There is plenty of opportunity for improvement. Bresette noted that "the building sector accounts for about 40 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. About 30 percent of energy used in commercial buildings is wasted." And, in his written testimony, Bresette remarked that, "we already have what we need—in terms of policies, technology, techniques, and program design—to improve our energy efficiency." Policymakers can strengthen building energy codes as well as minimum standards for appliances, equipment, and lighting products. Existing software and controls, high-performance building materials, and sustainable design practices can make a sizeable dent in energy waste.

In his written testimony, Bresette emphasized that "Congress has the ability to reestablish U.S. leadership in global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions [...] There are a number of policy proposals, including many bills already considered and approved by this committee, that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and set the U.S. on a track to meet global commitments while lowering utility bills for American homeowners, consumers, and businesses." Sen. Murkowski and Ranking Member Joe Manchin (D-WV) introduced a bipartisan energy efficiency package, the *Federal Energy and Water Management Performance Act*, and the Energy Committee has also approved the *Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act* sponsored by Sens. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Rob Portman (R-OH).

To start with, the Department of Energy has identified [\\$8.6 billion in measures](#) that would make federal buildings more efficient, saving money in the long run. "There is simply no excuse for inefficient federal buildings that needlessly waste scarce taxpayer dollars," wrote Bresette. Existing federal energy efficiency initiatives, such as the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), help low-income households become more energy efficiency and would greatly benefit from more resources. EESI's experience with ["on-bill financing" programs](#), which are offered by municipal utilities and electric cooperatives to their customers, demonstrates how cost-effective energy efficiency retrofits and affordable, accessible financing can result in many benefits, including lower electricity bills, more comfort, better health, and fewer carbon emissions.

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Bresette concluded his remarks at the hearing by looking at the bigger picture. “Energy efficiency offers benefits, but it works best as an element in a full set of clean energy solutions. I encourage the committee to consider energy efficiency along with policies to stimulate advancements in renewable energy, transmission and grid modernization technologies, storage, and other sources of emission reductions. In addition, climate adaptation and resilience legislation is complementary to these efforts to safeguard the energy system and critical infrastructure from disasters and extreme weather. It is commonly said that energy efficiency should come first. But that does not mean it should go alone.”

EESI Executive Director [Daniel Bresette’s full testimony can be found here](#). A video will also be posted on the page shortly after the hearing ends.

To learn more about energy efficiency, check out EESI’s recent briefings:

- [How do communities ensure federal energy programs help those most in need?](#)
- [Energy efficiency jobs are green jobs](#)
- [Equitable solutions to rural energy burdens](#)

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The Environmental and Energy Study Institute (www.eesi.org) is an independent, non-profit organization advancing innovative policy solutions to set us on a cleaner, more secure and sustainable energy path. EESI educates policymakers, builds coalitions and develops policy in support of energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable biomass, sustainable buildings, and sustainable transportation. EESI was founded by a bipartisan Congressional caucus in 1984, and its strong relationship with Congress helps EESI serve as a trusted source of credible, non-partisan information on energy and environmental issues. EESI receives no congressional funding and is supported through contributions and grants.