

February 19, 2025

The Honorable Chris Wright  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Wright:

Congratulations on your recent appointment and confirmation. On behalf of the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA), the leading trade association representing the \$34.9 billion U.S. convenience services industry, I welcome working with you and the Department of Energy (DOE) on a sound energy agenda.

NAMA membership spans small businesses, manufacturers, and operators that serve nearly 40 million Americans every day through vending, micro markets, office coffee services, and other convenience services. The diversity of unattended retail makes us a valuable partner to policymakers, fostering collaboration that ensures laws and regulations balance innovation, consumer convenience, and economic sustainability with environmental goals.

We urge DOE to take a careful, balanced evaluation of the rulemaking issues outlined below.

#### **Rulemaking on Commercial Refrigeration Equipment**

NAMA has been actively engaged in the DOE's rulemaking process concerning commercial refrigeration equipment (CRE).<sup>1</sup> Throughout this process, NAMA has provided critical input on the potential impact of proposed efficiency standards—not only on manufacturers of CRE but also on the operators who rely on these products nationwide.

President Trump's January 20, 2025, Executive Order, *Regulatory Freeze Pending Review*, explicitly directs federal agencies to withdraw any rules that had been sent to the Office of the Federal Register but had not yet been published by noon on January 20.<sup>2</sup> Despite this clear directive, DOE proceeded with the publication of the final rule, *Energy Conservation Standards for Commercial Refrigerators, Freezers, and Refrigerator-Freezers*, in the *Federal Register* on January 21, 2025.<sup>3</sup> This action directly contradicts the President's Executive Order.

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<sup>1</sup> Docket# EERE-2017-BT-STD-0007

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/regulatory-freeze-pending-review/>

<sup>3</sup> 90 FR 7464

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We appreciate the Department's decision to postpone implementation of this rule.<sup>4</sup> This action aligns with both the language and intent of the Executive Order. Any future rulemaking on CRE must carefully assess the feasibility of enhanced energy efficiency standards and ensure that potential benefits are weighed appropriately against the economic and operational costs to businesses.

### **Rulemaking on Beverage Vending Machines**

As you may be aware, DOE has been developing new energy efficiency standards for beverage vending machines (BVM) since 2020.<sup>5</sup> NAMA has communicated to the Department that these efficiency standards must carefully weigh the costs and benefits.<sup>6</sup> Previous energy and environmental regulations have hurt the competitiveness of domestic BVM manufacturers, and the proposed regulations could potentially drive U.S. companies completely out of this market.

We again appreciate President Trump's directive to pause all rulemakings to allow the administration time to consider how these legacy initiatives align with his agenda. This moratorium should also include the development of new BVM efficiency standards.

To date, NAMA has highlighted flaws and errors in the assumptions and methodology employed by DOE in the Notice of Public Rulemaking (NOPR). These include overstating the energy savings, relying on unproven or untried efficiency improvements, and underestimating the cost of new machine components.<sup>7</sup> Put simply, the costs are underappreciated, and the benefits are overhyped—a miscalculation hurting consumers and manufacturers.

We believe that by working collaboratively with industry stakeholders, DOE can instead develop standards that deliver genuine energy savings without imposing unnecessary cost burdens. A balanced approach—possibly aligning more closely with today's Energy Star levels—would benefit consumers, manufacturers, and the entire convenience services value chain. NAMA urges the Department to stop further work on the BVM rulemaking. The Draft Final Rule and other documents on this rule should not be issued.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and the Department to work toward a resolution that best serves all interested parties. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and, once again, congratulations on your confirmation.

Sincerely,

  
Matt Bisenius

Vice President, External Affairs

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-department-acts-lower-prices-and-increase-consumer-choice-household-appliances>

<sup>5</sup> Docket# EERE-2020-BT-STD-0014-0026

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/EERE-2020-BT-STD-0014-0026>

<sup>7</sup> Id.