

# Support for appliance bill grows — slowly

By Penny Wright  
special writer

"Government regulations cannot do a perfect job for everybody," said Joe Green, owner of D & G Heating and Cooling in Livonia. "There are trade-offs with every piece of legislation."

He referred to the National Appliance Energy Conservation bill, which received unanimous congressional support last year but was pocket-voted by President Reagan in the fall.

The bill was reintroduced in Congress Jan. 6.

THE APPLIANCE bill (S 85-HR 87) sets tougher minimum energy efficiency standards for a broad range of heating and cooling appliances, including refrigerators, freezers, furnaces, clothes dryers, air-conditioners and dishwashers.

At present the U.S. Department of Energy sets appliance efficiency levels without legislative backing. Several individual states have passed their own standards.

Green has mixed feelings about the bill.

"Yes, it is good for consumers to have federal standards. People do not always know or care about energy efficiency, and they can get cheated by poorly manufactured



our land  
**Penny Wright**

products that can't produce the savings claimed," he said.

"On the other hand, standards are not good for the consumer when the law doesn't take into consideration how or where the appliance will be used."

Green said a standard for appliance efficiency for the whole country may not fit the needs of a particular region.

"In our part of the country, an inefficient furnace sometimes works better in an older home than one of the best energy saving types."

COST TRADE-OFFS are also an issue with the new bill.

While proponents acknowledge tougher federal standards could raise prices of appliances, they say the resulting net energy savings and reduction in energy imports will offset higher prices.

Researchers at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in Berkeley, Calif., have found the energy efficiency of

the average new household appliance is well below the best unit available, and even further below the level of performance that is technically achievable and economical.

Studies at the laboratory show an individual may realize modest energy savings using the most efficient appliances available, but the total cost savings for all such appliances

## Our area gaining jobs — Consumers

Nearly 14,000 new jobs — nearly half in the metro Detroit suburbs — were created in 1986 by new and expanding industry and major businesses in the area served by Consumers Power Co., according to data compiled by the utility.

The largest increase in jobs, 7,929, occurred in the company's metro region, which includes Farmington, Mount Clemens and Livonia.

There were 122 new or expanding businesses in that area in 1986, including Chrysler Warren Truck, which added 500 employees; General

is impressive.

One year of electric appliance sales represents the amount of energy produced by six large 1000-MW baseload power plants. The researchers contend the equation would drop to two power plants if all new appliances were as efficient as the best projected 1990s technology.

UNTIL RECENTLY, appliance manufacturers have resisted tighter federal standards. They say the standards were often unrealistic and too costly to be practical.

Their resistance crumpled after six states (excluding Michigan) enacted minimum appliance standards. Eleven more states have moved to pass tighter standards.

Speaking in New York last week,

Joe McGuire of the Airconditioning and Refrigeration Institute (ARI), a Virginia-based organization representing manufacturers of heating and cooling equipment, said appliance manufacturers were seeking federal standards to avoid the confusion of basing production on meeting different state standards.

"Without federal standards, he said, 'appliance manufacturers cannot take advantage of long production runs and the national distribution system to keep costs down.'"

BOB NELSON, director of Regulatory and Consumer Affairs for the Michigan Public Service Commission (PSC), expressed a similar view. "We feel that if 50 states enact minimum appliance standards, the public

would have to bear exorbitant costs."

According to Nelson, the higher appliance costs that may follow from tightening federal standards will be offset by personal energy savings.

"The current lull in the energy crisis does little to diminish the importance of saving energy. The energy problem is bound to heat up again. It is just a matter of time before we have to conserve again."

PSC supports the appliance act and has urged Michigan legislators to co-sponsor the bill.

"We would like quick action on this bill. The longer we continue having different appliance efficiency standards, the more costly it will be for the consumer."

gas in the metro region. Outstate it sells both electrically and natural gas.

Altogether, the company's economic statistics show, 219 new plants and businesses opened in its 67-county service territory last year. Another 85 enlarged their operations.

These new and expanding businesses, at least 5,000 square feet in

size, meant 13,891 new jobs in Consumers' seven operating regions.

McCormick said the utility's economic development department played an important role in the expansion or location of a number of new businesses in Michigan. "That's a role we will continue to play," McCormick said.

## Mamat new GOP counsel

Frank T. Mamat, partner in the Bloomfield Hills labor law firm of The Fishman Group, has been appointed first general counsel for the Republican Committee of Oakland County. A long-time Republican ac-

tivist in Washington and New York before coming to Michigan, Mamat is GOP township director for West Bloomfield and a member of the party finance committee.

## Levin to talk on Mideast

U.S. Sen. Carl Levin of Michigan will discuss "Iran and the Middle East" at 9:30 a.m. Friday on Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills.

The program is part of OCC's distinguished speakers series. There is free admission to the public in the Smith Performing Arts Theater. The

campus is on Orchard Lake Road south of I-696.

A Democrat, Levin is in his second term. He recently returned from a tour of the Middle East. He is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The March 19 speaker in the series will be Owen Bieber, president of the United Auto Workers union.

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