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Bills tackle energy use, efficiency

New standards could save state \$536 million over 25 years

**By Gargi Chakrabarty, Rocky Mountain News
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Coloradans could cut their energy costs by as much as \$536 million over the next 25 years. And it wouldn't take much effort. Homeowners could install energy efficient gas heaters, pool pumps or torchier light fixtures. Businesses could install better commercial refrigerators, washing machines, air conditioners, ice makers or exit signs that consume less electricity. The key is to install products covered by federal energy efficiency standards.

"If these energy efficiency standards are adopted, Colorado will need one less new power plant, and water consumption will drop by 14 billion gallons during 2008 to 2020," said Howard Geller, executive director of the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project.

Geller referred to a recent report that found consumers in Colorado could save \$536 million through 2030 by adopting energy efficiency standards on 15 types of equipment and appliances. Such standards would cut electricity use in Colorado by 756 million kilowatt hours per year by 2020, enough to meet the annual electricity needs of 81,000 thousand homes, the report noted.

The report backs House Bill 1162 on energy efficiency standards sponsored by Rep. Alice Borodkin, D-Denver, this week. Another bill, HB 1133, was introduced by Rep. Tom Plant, D-Nederland; it aims to boost local energy efficiency programs.

"With rising energy prices a problem plaguing all consumers in Colorado, this bill will offer a great first-step solution," Borodkin said. If the bill is approved, manufacturers and retailers would have a head start because the standards would not take effect until 2008. The bill bans the sale of noncompliant, inefficient products in Colorado after that year. Such standards have been adopted by California, Connecticut and Maryland. A bill on similar standards is pending in New Jersey.

"The states are leading the way," said Andrew deLaski, executive director of the Appliance Standards Awareness Project, who co-authored the report. "With consumers and businesses getting hammered by high energy prices, persistent worries about energy security and the memory of the Northeast blackout still fresh, state policy-makers are looking to energy efficiency."

Saving energy

House Bill 1162 seeks energy efficiency standards on 15 products not currently covered by federal standards. The products include:

- Traffic lights and exit signs
- Commercial refrigerators, freezers, clothes washers, larger package air conditioners, ice makers and pre-rinse spray valves used in commercial kitchens
- Pool pumps, torchier light fixtures, digital television adapters, gas heaters and external power supplies for electronics

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