BETTER APPLIANCES: AN ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE, FEATURES, AND PRICE AS EFFICIENCY HAS IMPROVED

The *Better Appliances* report analyzes how the choices available to consumers have changed over time as efficiency standards have taken effect for ten residential, commercial, and lighting products. As products have become more efficient:

- Performance generally stayed the same or improved;
- Manufacturers offered new features to consumers; and
- Prices *declined* or stayed the same for five of the nine products for which price data were available, and for the other four products, observed price increases are outweighed by electricity bill savings.
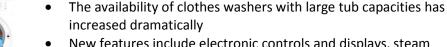
A Few Household Examples:

Refrigerators

- Temperature performance has improved and noise levels have dropped
- The average volume of available models has increased
- Consumers now have a significantly wider range of options in bottom-freezer refrigerators including French-door models
- New features include new types of water dispensers, in-the-door ice makers, and additional compartments
- Between 1987 and 2010, real prices decreased by about 35% while average energy use decreased by more than 50%

Clothes Washers

- Many clothes washers today do a better job of removing stains and are gentler on clothes than older washers
- The availability of clothes washers with large tub capacities has increased dramatically
- New features include electronic controls and displays, steam cycles, and automatic dispensers
- Between 1987 and 2010, real prices decreased by about 45% while average energy use decreased by 75%

Dishwashers

- Dishwashers have continued to provide good washing performance using significantly less energy and water
- Features such as stainless steel tubs and delayed start have become more common, even on low-price-point models
- New features include a new type of filter that reduces noise and bulk dispensers
- Between 1987 and 2010, real prices decreased by about 30% while average energy use decreased by 50%