

MAIN STREET EFFICIENCY ACT

H.R. 4903, Sponsor: Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.)

**S. 2665, Sponsor: Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.)
Cosponsors: Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.)**

Small businesses are the backbone of the U.S. economy, accounting for nearly half of the nation's employment (60.6 million) and GDP. But small businesses are struggling now more than ever. The economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic spared no sector but continues to hit small businesses the hardest. In fact, **more small businesses were closed** as of the end of June 2021 than at any time during the pandemic.

The energy efficiency workforce is a microcosm of small businesses: 80% of businesses delivering energy efficiency – through the design, construction, installation, and manufacturing of energy-efficient technologies and products – employ fewer than 20 workers. Heading into 2020, energy efficiency led the clean energy sector in employment with nearly 2.4 million workers in 99.7% of counties across the United States, but has itself **struggled to build back** after losing nearly 270,000 workers (11%).

The Main Street Efficiency Act would kickstart the U.S. economy by delivering energy savings to small businesses, by small businesses, helping to tame the nearly \$60 billion spent on energy costs by small businesses each year and allowing entrepreneurs to reinvest in their businesses and to provide competitive wages for employees.

WHAT DOES THE MAIN STREET EFFICIENCY ACT DO?

The Main Street Efficiency Act would establish a matching grant program at the Department of Energy to make energy efficiency improvements in small businesses across the United States, reducing their utility bills right away and long into the future. Federal funding would be delivered to small businesses through utility Demand Side Management (DSM) programs, allowing taxpayer dollars to be highly leveraged with utility incentives, enabling low-to-no cost upgrades. By utilizing the 1.3 million local workers that support DSM programs, MSEA would stimulate jobs within the utilities and communities they serve.

BENEFITS OF THE MAIN STREET EFFICIENCY ACT

- Small businesses can receive zero-cost equipment and energy efficiency upgrades, which will help them recover from the economic shutdown by lowering their utility bills immediately and well into the future.
- Energy consumption in America's small businesses, which can account for **40-50% of a utility's commercial load**, will be reduced.
- The ecosystem of DSM energy service providers, electricians, and skilled and unskilled labor, which represents a workforce of approximately 1.3 million across the nation, can recover and expand.
- The health, safety, comfort, and productivity of occupants of small commercial spaces will be improved.
- The program will help the overall economy to recover by lowering demand and increasing energy productivity.
- It will help states meet increasingly aggressive goals for energy demand and carbon emissions reductions.