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Cut flat-screen TVs' energy use

Posted: 10/16/2009 07:32:21 PM PDT

Flat-screen televisions are the Hummers of consumer electronics, in some cases using three times the electricity of an old cathode-ray tube set. The California Energy Commission is considering requiring manufacturers to cut the amount of electricity they use by a third in two years and half by 2013.

This would save the average Californian as much as \$250 in energy costs over the life of a television. And, if the past is any indication, the rules will lead the way for the rest of the nation. The commission should adopt them when it meets early next month.

The Consumer Electronics Association, an industry group, is rolling out typical objections: The regulations will cost jobs and raise prices. But there's no evidence on either count.

Many manufacturers, including Vizio and 3M, support the rules. They say technology is advancing so quickly that the standards won't raise prices; hundreds of televisions on the market today already meet the 2011 standards.

The commission's staff has responded to industry worries by exempting televisions over 58 inches.

The rules the Energy Commission adopted for

refrigerators in the 1970s are viewed as the primary reason they now use one-quarter of the energy they did then, while offering many more features. The commission has helped the state keep its per-capita energy use the same for the past three decades, while usage has risen 40 percent in the rest of the country.

These rules for television manufacturers would cut greenhouse gas emissions, provide a national model and save Californians an estimated \$8.1 billion in energy costs over 10 years. The rules should be approved.

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