

## [Power and Security Systems \(PASS\) Act \(Public Law 115-78\)](#)

Extends an exemption to energy conservation standards for external power supplies until 2023 and requires the Department of Energy to rule two years prior to that date on whether such standards or an alternative should actually apply to these devices.

Updated last **December 14, 2017**  
for the 11/02/2017 Public Law.



### WHAT IT DOES

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The Power and Security Systems (PASS) Act ([Public Law 115-78](#)), amends the [Energy Policy and Conservation Act](#) to require the Department of Energy (DOE) to issue a rule by July 1, 2021, that determines whether energy conservation standards for external power supplies should be amended. The rule must contain any amended standards and apply to products manufactured on or after July 1, 2023.

The previous law exempted external power supplies for security and life safety systems (i.e., smoke detectors and home security alarms) from energy conservation standards until July 1, 2017. The PASS Act extends the exemptions until July 1, 2023.

The [Energy Security and Independence Act](#) (EISA) of 2007 required improved energy efficiency for battery chargers and external power supplies operating in certain modes, including standby or “no-load” mode. Security and life safety systems, however, are always connected to a power supply and stay “active” to check signals and remain in constant communication. Examples of such systems are fire alarm signals, security systems, intrusion detection, and access control systems. The power supplies for these systems are not designed with the ability to operate in standby mode. The PASS act extends exemptions for the DOE’s energy efficiency beyond the July 1, 2017 end of the exemption under the current statute to July 1, 2023.

### BACKGROUND

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The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 was intended to move the United States toward energy independence and security by increasing the production of renewable energy; increasing the energy efficiency of existing products, buildings and vehicles; promoting research and deployment for greenhouse gas (GHG) capture and storage options; and improving the federal government’s energy performance.

Security and life safety products have historically had difficulty meeting the energy efficiency measures set by the DOE in response to EISA, largely due to their constant “active” mode. Because security and life safety products are always on, they have difficulty meeting the requirements that other standby or no-load products can easily meet. These systems typically rely on Class A [external power sources](#) (usually used to power systems that exist, at least in part, in standby or no-load mode), rather than internal batteries.

The EISA originally exempted these products from DOE’s energy efficiency requirements; however, this exemption expired July 1, 2017. As a result, all security and life safety products that did not meet these standards were no longer in compliance with DOE standards.

The Congressional Budget Office score on the PASS Act showed only minimal economic costs to the passing of the bill, which contributed to its easy passage.

**RELEVANT SCIENCE**

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Class A [external power supplies](#), regulated under EISA for energy efficiency standards, by definition include security and life safety products that are always in “active” mode.

Class A external power supplies are classified as products that:

1. Convert line voltage alternate current into lower voltage alternate current;
2. Are able to convert only one alternate current output at a time;
3. Are sold with, or intended to be used with, a separate product that constitutes the primary load;
4. Are contained in a separate physical enclosure from the end-use product;
5. Are connected to the end-use product via a removable or hard-wired connection; and
6. Have an output power less than or equal to 250 watts.

### [Energy Efficiency and Conservation](#)

- *Efficiency*: using technology that requires less energy to carry out its same function. For example, LED lightbulbs use only ten [watts-hours](#) of energy to provide an hour of light, while incandescent lightbulbs use 60 watt-hours for that same hour of light.
- *Conservation*: behavior that results in the use of less energy. For example, turning off the lights when you leave your house.

The US government has [programs to promote energy efficiency](#), such as [EnergyStar](#), as well as legislation, such as the [Energy Policy and Conservation Act](#). Energy efficiency is both good for elongating the life of technology by reducing energy consumption as well as reducing overall energy consumption.

### [Benefits of Energy Efficiency](#)

- Energy efficiency benefits consumers, producers, and the environment.
- [Social benefits](#): poverty alleviation, health and well-being, lower local air pollution
- [Environmental benefits](#): GHG emissions reductions, lower fuel consumption
- [Economic benefits](#): lower energy prices, industrial productivity, energy security
- [Energy Efficiency Tips](#)

### [External Power Supplies](#)

- External Power Supplies (EPS) convert alternating current power from wall outlets into lower voltage direct or alternating current power to be used directly by electric-powered devices.
- EPS are separate enclosures that power devices, usually through a cord and plug.
- The average American household has five to ten EPS devices.
- They are used to power devices such as laptop computers, cellphones, appliances, etc.
- Energy efficiency of EPS devices is often very low, reaching only about 50% to 70% efficiency

**ENDORSEMENTS & OPPOSITION**

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The PASS Act was passed with unanimous bipartisan support, as well as the support of security and life safety product industry. The importance of security and life safety products and the understanding of the potential risks that could come from unachievable energy efficiency requirements led to bipartisan support for this bill.

Endorsements:

- Security Industry Association, [press release](#), November 9, 2017: “The PASS Act provides much-needed certainty to

manufacturers, installers and service providers who are among the thousands of Americans that work in the security industry, but ultimately it benefits the millions of American consumers that depend on such security and life safety systems”

- National Electrical Manufacturers Association, Security Industry Association, and Electronic Security Administration, [letter](#), January 18, 2017: “We are writing to express our strong support for the [PASS Act], which maintains an important exemption for certain security and life safety products from US DOE efficiency requirements for external power supplies in standby or 'no-load' mode.”

#### Opposition:

- At present, there has not been any publicly reported opposition to the PASS Act.

#### STATUS

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Signed into law on November 2, 2017, by President Donald Trump.

#### POLICY HISTORY

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The PASS Act was passed with bipartisan support to extend the exemption for these products to 2023, allowing these necessary products to stay on the market and also providing additional time for the producing firms to improve the energy efficiency of the products.

- 1/23/2017 - Introduced in Senate
- 5/24/2017 - Committee on Energy and Natural Resources - Reported by Senator Murkowski without amendment. With written report [115-76](#)
- 8/1/2017 - Passed Senate without amendment by unanimous consent
- 10/11/2017 - Passed House
- 10/24/2017 - Presented to the President
- 11/2/2017 - Signed by President. Became Public Law 115-78

A version of the PASS Act was introduced in the House ([HR 511](#)) and was sponsored by Representative Peter Welch (D-VT-at large) and cosponsored by Representative Susan Brooks (R-IN-5).

- 1/12/2017 - Introduced in the House
- 1/23/2017 - Passed/agreed to in House - on motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, agreed to by voice vote (text of measure as passed: CR [H567](#))

#### SPONSORS

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Sponsor: [Senator Cory Gardner](#) (R-CO)

Cosponsor: [Senator Maria Cantwell](#) (D-WA)

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**ENERGY SUBCATEGORY**

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[Use](#)

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**RECOMMENDED CITATION**

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