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# Editorial: State can lead on energy-saving TVs

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To hear some people tell it, the big bad regulators at the California Energy Commission are coming for your television. They're going to ban big-screen TVs and force you to shop on the black market if you want to see next year's Super Bowl in life-size high-def.

Don't believe it. The Energy Commission, after a year of study, is close to adopting new regulations designed to make big-screen televisions as energy-efficient as washing machines, electric dryers and refrigerators. The new rules will save electricity and save you money, both directly on the power you use and indirectly by avoiding the need for California's utilities to build costly □ and polluting □ new power plants.

This is the same agency that led the nation in mandating energy efficiency for kitchen and laundry appliances. Refrigerators used to be the biggest energy hogs in the home. But after the California Energy Commission required them to meet new efficiency standards, appliance companies responded and now refrigerators are bigger, better and using less electricity than ever before.

California, in fact, is the most energy-efficient state in the nation. According to the commission, our electricity use per capita has remained constant over the past 30 years. The average Californian uses about 40 percent less electricity than the national average.

But as other appliances have become more energy-efficient, televisions, especially big-screen televisions, have become one of the major users of household electricity. California's 35 million televisions now account for 10 percent of all domestic electricity consumption.

The Energy Commission's proposed new rules would force manufacturers to produce sets that use one-third less electricity by 2011 and about 50 percent less by 2013. The state says about 400 TVs on the market today already meet the 2011 standard, and some manufacturers say they will have no problem complying with the stricter rules due to take effect in 2013.

The Consumer Electronics Association, which represents some television manufacturers, has been fighting this proposal, claiming it will ban the sale in California of every plasma screen larger than 60 inches and plenty of smaller televisions, too. The association says the rule would cost California jobs as local video outlets shut down because residents will be crossing state lines to get their big-screen fix.

But plenty of manufacturers are just fine with the new rules, and they say the industry is already moving in the direction the commission recommends. Vizio, which makes both LCD and plasma televisions, says it could live with an even faster timeline for the energy diet. And 3M, which makes flat screen technology, also supports the changes.

The new rules are expected to save consumers \$18 to \$30 per year in utility bills for each television in their home. Once fully phased in, the rules will save enough electricity to power more than 850,000 single-family homes □ equivalent to the population of Anaheim, Burbank, Glendale and Palo Alto combined.

California has always led the nation in protecting the environment and protecting consumer pocketbooks by pushing industry to be cleaner and more energy-efficient. Far from hurting the state's economy, our environmental ethos has helped establish the state as an attractive place to live, work and play.

Energy-efficient televisions will just be one more small step in that same healthy direction.