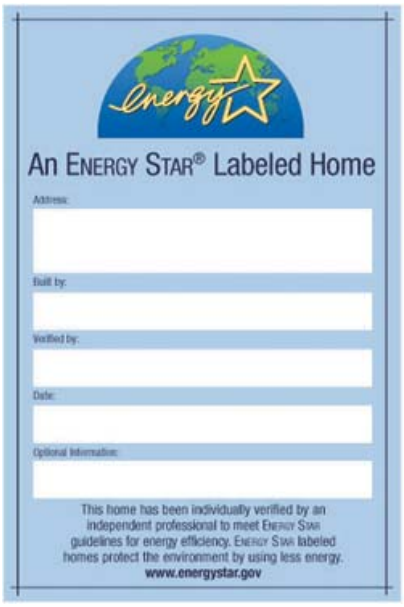
Will Your New Home *Really* be Energy-Efficient?

Ask Your Builder These Key Questions:



☐ **Has the home qualified for the ENERGY STAR label?**
The ENERGY STAR label assures you that your home's predicted heating, cooling and hot water energy use is at least 30% less than a comparable home based on the national Model Energy Code. Be aware that outfitting your home with ENERGY STAR labeled products (e.g. windows, lighting, appliances, etc.) will not necessarily make it an ENERGY STAR labeled home.

☐ **Are the home's windows appropriate for the climate?**
With improvements made in window technologies, it is now possible and more affordable to buy energy-efficient windows designed for your home's specific climate. Houses in colder climates should have windows with a low U-value, effectively holding heat in the house and preventing condensation. In hot climates, a low Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) is important, allowing visible light into the house while blocking out heat. Look for a window's National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) rating to find these specifications, or simply look for windows with the ENERGY STAR label.

☐ **Is the home's insulation optimized and was it properly installed?**
Insulation in a home's walls and attic serves as a protective barrier, keeping out excessive heat and cold and maintaining even temperatures between and across rooms. The effectiveness of insulation increases as its R-value increases. For insulation to work properly, it also *must* be installed carefully, without gaps, crimping, or compression. This is most important in places where insulation fits around pipes, electrical wiring and outlets, or other obstacles.

☐ **Is the home's building envelope properly sealed and tested for air leakage?**
The average home has hundreds--if not thousands--of small holes through which heated or cooled air escapes to the outside. Those holes also allow moisture, dust, pollen, and insects to enter your home. A tightly sealed and properly ventilated home, verified on-site by a home energy rater, will not only reduce your energy bills but also improve your home's indoor air quality.

☐ **Is the home's heating and cooling (HVAC) equipment highly efficient and properly sized?**
Furnaces rated at least 90 AFUE and air conditioners rated 12 SEER or higher qualify for the ENERGY STAR label, meaning they are very energy-efficient. This equipment saves you money, often comes with longer warranties, and requires less maintenance. Also, when a home is built with energy-efficient windows, optimal insulation, and tight (not leaky) construction, smaller HVAC equipment can more effectively maintain comfort and will last longer.

☐ **Is the home's ductwork tightly sealed, sufficiently insulated, and tested for air leakage?** Tightly sealed ducts are crucial to energy efficiency. Typical ducts leak 20-30% of the air forced through them, wasting 20-30% of the money you spend on heating and cooling. With proper sealing and insulation, verified on-site by a home energy rater, you can substantially reduce these leaks.

For more information on ENERGY STAR labeled homes, or to find an ENERGY STAR partnered homebuilder or energy rater, visit our Web site at www.energystar.gov or call toll-free 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937).