Dear ENERGY STAR partners,

This document provides information on the requirements for qualifying a home under ENERGY STAR for New Homes Version 2.5. Version 2.5 is same as Version 3 except for several changes that will help partners successfully transition from the Version 2 to 3 guidelines. *Therefore, EPA has not created separate program documents specifically for Version 2.5. Instead, this letter serves to identify those parts of the Version 3 guidelines that will not be fully implemented under 2.5.*

Version 2.5 adopts the three key features of Version 3, including a variable HERS Index threshold, a Size Adjustment Factor, and new inspection checklists. The new Version 3 checklists, in particular, will require increased planning and coordination with builder clients and trades in order to successfully implement. For this reason, the new inspection checklists must be completed under Version 2.5, but an allowance is provided for deficiencies during this transitional period as described below. This will allow partners to identify what parts of the full Version 3 guidelines require further preparation and assistance before the requirements are fully phased in.

While Raters will be required to complete Version 3 training provided by RESNET-accredited training providers by January 1, 2012 to qualify homes under Version 3, it is recommended, but not required, that Raters participate in this training prior to completing the inspection checklists under Version 2.5. Similarly, while builders will be required to complete training provided by EPA by January 1, 2012 and HVAC contractors will be required to complete training provided through industry associations to complete the HVAC System Quality Installation Contractor Checklist, it is recommended, but not required, that these parties also participate in this training prior to completing their respective Inspection Checklists.

See below for the specific requirements of Version 2.5, organized by program document. These are represented graphically in Exhibit 1. Exhibit 2 illustrates the timeline for implementing both the Version 2.5 and Version 3 guidelines. Note that homes can be qualified under the Version 2.5 guidelines in advance of the phase-in dates in Exhibit 2, at the discretion of builders and their Raters. However, homes shall not be qualified as Version 3 until January 1, 2012 except as part of a limited Version 3 pilot administered by an ENERGY STAR for Homes Sponsor or where required by a code jurisdiction.

## Requirements for Version 2.5

### National Program Requirements

- Partners shall meet Version 3 of the National Program Requirements including the new ENERGY STAR Reference Design for the Prescriptive Path and the new ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target for the Performance Path. Any and all exceptions relate to the Inspection Checklists; those exceptions are listed below, organized by checklist.

### Inspection Checklist – Thermal Enclosure System

- All items on this Inspection Checklist shall be completed (i.e., the Rater must indicate whether each item must be corrected, whether the item is builder or Rater approved, or whether the item is not applicable to the home).
- Homes shall pass all requirements of 'Section 3: Fully-Aligned Air Barriers' and 'Section 5: Air Sealing' to qualify. Noncompliance with items in other sections of this Checklist shall not prevent homes from earning the label.
- Although the builder may assume responsibility for verifying a maximum of eight (8) items on this Checklist under Version 3, this limit has been reduced to six (6) items for the two sections being enforced under Version 2.5, Sections 3 and 5.
- The Version 2 slab edge insulation exemption remains only for Version 2.5; therefore, up to 25% of the slab edge may be uninsulated in 2009 IECC Climate Zones 4 and 5.

### Inspection Checklist – HVAC System Quality Installation for Contractors

- All items on this Inspection Checklist shall be completed. However, noncompliance with items will not prevent homes from earning the label.

### Inspection Checklist – HVAC System Quality Installation for Raters

- All items on this Inspection Checklist shall be completed. However, noncompliance with items will not prevent homes from earning the label.
- Duct leakage to outdoors is maintained at the Version 2 levels and shall not exceed the following limits:
    - 4 CFM / 100 sq. ft. of conditioned floor area for the Prescriptive Path
    - 6 CFM / 100 sq. ft. of conditioned floor area for the Performance Path
- No limit on total duct leakage is imposed.

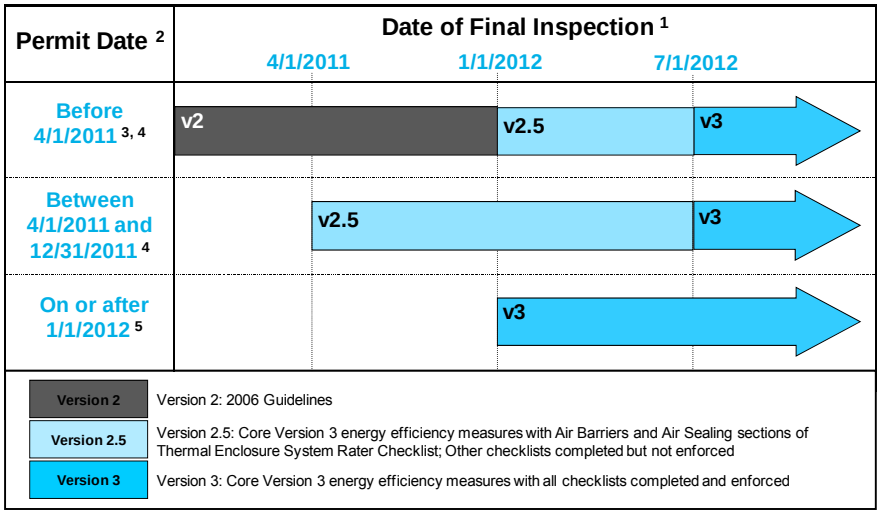
### Inspection Checklist – Water Management System

- All items on this Inspection Checklist shall be completed. However, noncompliance with items will not prevent homes from earning the label.

## Exhibit 1: Transition to ENERGY STAR Version 3

| | Version 2 | Version 2.5 | Version 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Performance Path** | Fixed HERS Index Target | Variable HERS Index Target | |
| **Prescriptive Path** | Builder Option Package (BOP) | ENERGY STAR Reference Design | |
| **House Size** | No impact on requirements | Size Adjustment Factor | |
| **Duct Leakage to Outside** | • ≤ 4 $CFM_{25}$ per 100ft$^2$ CFA for Prescriptive Path<br>• ≤ 6 $CFM_{25}$ per 100ft$^2$ CFA for Performance Path | | ≤ 4 $CFM_{25}$ per 100ft$^2$ CFA for both Prescriptive and Performance Paths |
| **Total Duct Leakage** | No maximum leakage | | ≤ 8 $CFM_{25}$ per 100ft$^2$ CFA |
| **ENERGY STAR Labeled Products - Prescriptive Path** | ≥ 5 ENERGY STAR qualified products | • Where refrigerators, dishwashers, ceiling fans or exhaust fans are installed, products shall be ENERGY STAR qualified.<br>• ENERGY STAR qualified light bulbs or fixtures shall be installed in 80% of RESNET-defined Qualifying Light Fixture Locations. (Alternate: ENERGY STAR Advanced Lighting Package) | |
| **ENERGY STAR Labeled Products - Performance Path** | ≥ 1 ENERGY STAR qualified product category | • No requirements, though the Expanded ENERGY STAR Reference Design Definition is configured with an ENERGY STAR qualified refrigerator and dishwasher, qualified ceiling and exhaust fans, and fluorescent lighting in 80% of lighting fixtures in RESNET-defined Qualifying Light Fixture Locations.<br>• Therefore, the ENERGY STAR HERS Index Target must be met by either including efficient appliances and lighting or by offsetting their performance with other efficiency features. | |
| **HERS Scoring Limitations** | Up to 20% of screw-in light bulb sockets may use CFLs to achieve HERS Index target. | No limit on CFLs that may be used to achieve HERS index. | |
| | On-site power may not be used to achieve HERS Index target. | On-site power may be used if the home is larger than the Benchmark Home, but it can only contribute to incremental change in the HERS Index caused by the Size Adjustment Factor. | |
| **Inspection Checklists** | Thermal Bypass Checklist completed & enforced. Builder may verify up to six (6) items. | All sections of all Version 3 Inspection Checklists completed. | |
| | | Sections 3 & 5 of Thermal Enclosure System Rater Checklist enforced. Builder may verify up to six (6) items. | All sections of all Version 3 Inspection Checklists enforced. Builder may verify up to eight (8) items of the Thermal Enclosure System Rater Checklist. |
| | 25% of slab edge in CZ 4 & 5 may be uninsulated under Version 2 and 2.5 | | No slab edge insulation exemption |

## Exhibit 2: ENERGY STAR for New Homes Version 3 Implementation Schedule




1. The date of the final inspection for the home (i.e., the date at which all of the field inspections are complete for the home, not necessarily the date when the label is issued).
2. The Rater may define the 'permit date' as either the date that the permit was issued or the date of the contract on the home. In cases were permit or contract dates are not available, Providers have discretion to estimate permit dates based on other construction schedule factors. These assumptions should be both defensible and documented.
3. All low-income projects financed through low-income housing agencies may earn the ENERGY STAR under the last iteration of the guidelines, Version 2, until January 1, 2013 as long as the application for funding for those homes was received by the low-income housing agency before April 1, 2011 and the housing project includes at least one unit reserved for low-income tenants. If the application for funding is received between April 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011, then the homes must earn the ENERGY STAR under the Version 2.5 guidelines if completed before July 1, 2012, and under the Version 3 guidelines if completed on or after July 1, 2012. If the application for funding is received on or after January 1, 2012 then the homes must earn the ENERGY STAR under the Version 3 guidelines.
4. Homes can be qualified under the Version 2.5 guidelines in advance of the dates above at the discretion of builders and their Raters. However, homes may not be qualified as Version 3 until January 1, 2012.
5. Where a utility or state sponsor is mandating or incentivizing early adoption of Version 3 in their area, EPA will allow the labeling of ENERGY STAR Version 3 prior to January 1, 2012 on a pilot program basis, provided that the sponsor meets certain requirements.