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December 17, 2010

Dear Partners,

Beginning on April 1, 2011, the ENERGY STAR for Homes Version 2.5 guidelines will become effective across the country. However, due to Florida's advanced energy code, homes in this state will be qualified for ENERGY STAR under a modified approach that is consistent with EPA's [Interim Florida guidelines](#) that took effect on June 1, 2009.

Under the current Interim Florida guidelines, to qualify for ENERGY STAR, homes permitted beginning on June 1, 2009 are required to either achieve a HERS Index of 77 or lower or to comply with the [Florida Builder Option Package](#). In all cases, they must also satisfy the requirements of the ENERGY STAR Thermal Bypass Checklist.

To earn the label under v2.5 of the program, homes in Florida shall meet all of the following criteria:

- The home shall either achieve a HERS Index of 77 or lower or comply with the Florida Builder Option Package;
- All items on the Thermal Enclosure System Rater 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) and the home shall pass all requirements of 'Section 3: Fully-Aligned Air Barriers' and 'Section 5: Air Sealing'. 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 items on this checklist under v3, this limit has been reduced to six (6) items for the two sections being enforced under v2.5, Sections 3 and 5;
- All items on HVAC System Quality Installation Contractor Checklist, HVAC System Quality Installation Rater Checklist, and Water Management System Builder Checklist shall be completed. However, noncompliance with items will not prevent homes from earning the label.

ENERGY STAR New Homes Implementation Schedule for Florida:

- 1) Single family homes permitted<sup>[1]</sup> before April 1, 2011 can continue to be qualified under the current Interim Florida guidelines until July 1, 2011, after which they must be qualified under the new v2.5 Florida guidelines.
- 2) Condos and apartments in multi-family buildings permitted before April 1, 2011 can continue to be qualified under the current Interim Florida guidelines until January 1, 2012.<sup>[2]</sup>
- 3) All homes both permitted and completed between April 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011 must be qualified using the new v2.5 Florida guidelines.

Because Florida's energy code is anticipated to become more stringent beginning January 2012, EPA is in the process of developing more stringent Florida-specific guidelines for homes qualified after this date. EPA expects to share these revised guidelines with stakeholders in the first quarter of 2011. These guidelines will apply to homes in Florida with completion dates on or after January 1, 2012, regardless of the date of permitting.

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact us at [energystarhomes@energystar.gov](mailto:energystarhomes@energystar.gov)

Regards,

The ENERGY STAR for New Homes Team

<sup>[1]</sup>EPA has expanded the application of the term 'permitted by' in determining which version of the guidelines a home must be built to earn the label. Specifically, in recognition of common practice to not pull permits until after a home is sold, the home's signed contract date will be considered equivalent to the permit date.

<sup>[2]</sup> Multi-family homes financed through low-income housing agencies may earn the ENERGY STAR under the current Interim Florida guidelines until January 1, 2013, as long as the application for funding for those homes is received by the low-income housing agency before April 1, 2011. If the application for funding is received between April 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011, the homes must earn the ENERGY STAR under the Version 2.5 guidelines (in this case, the Florida 2.5 guidelines) if completed before January 1, 2012, and under the Version 3 guidelines (TBD for Florida) if completed after January 1, 2012. If the application for funding is received on or after January 1, 2012, the homes must earn the ENERGY STAR under the Version 3 guidelines (TBD for Florida).