

FAQs on New EPA/DOE Partnership on Energy Efficiency of Buildings and Products

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: What is the announcement?

A: EPA and DOE are announcing a new partnership on energy efficiency in buildings as an important step in strengthening the Administration's commitment to energy efficiency. It includes a new agreement signed by the EPA Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation and the DOE Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. The partnership addresses two programs for which each agency has important roles: the ENERGY STAR program and the National Building Energy Rating Program. The agreement updates and replaces a 10 year old agreement between the agencies on ENERGY STAR and other efforts. The agreement outlines

- An enhanced ENERGY STAR program and a new 'best in class' labeling program,
- An enhanced national building energy rating program that will be widely applied in Recovery Act programs and beyond, and
- An ongoing framework for partnership, coordination, and collaboration between the two agencies across these programs.
- Clear lines of responsibility between the two agencies that build on the expertise of each agency,
- New opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback to the administration on these programs.

Q: Why is this new partnership necessary?

A: Greater investment in energy efficiency is critical to addressing the challenges of climate change, rising energy bills, energy security and other issues. The two programs covered in the agreement -- the ENERGY STAR program and the National Building Energy Rating Program -- are key administration programs for guiding these investments. This new partnership with clear Agency roles and responsibilities will use the strengths and resources available at each Agency to effectively advance energy efficiency and enhance and expand these two key administration programs.

Q: What are the clear roles and responsibilities for the Agencies?

A: The agreement outlines clear roles and responsibilities for EPA and DOE for improving energy efficiency in the nation's buildings;

- (1) DOE will be the lead agency for further developing and implementing a National Building Rating Program that will be widely applied in Recovery Act programs and beyond, and
- (2) EPA will be the lead agency and brand manager for the ENERGY STAR program and a new program for "best in class" products. EPA will manage its

ENERGY STAR residential and commercial buildings initiatives in coordination with the National Building Rating Program.

(3) Each Agency, in their role as lead agency -- will draw on the support of the other as appropriate and as agreed to by the Agencies.

Q: What are the enhancements to the ENERGY STAR program and why are they necessary?

A: The ENERGY STAR products program has grown to encompass products in more than 60 product categories and is used by millions of Americans in selecting products that help them save money and protect the environment. A number of enhancements will be undertaken to maintain and build the ENERGY STAR as a consumer trust mark for cost-effective energy-efficient products that offer consumers the features they looking for. These enhancements include:

- The ENERGY STAR program will be expanded to cover more products at a faster pace
- Revisions to existing ENERGY STAR specifications will be undertaken more frequently so that the ENERGY STAR label continues to highlight top energy efficient products
- A comprehensive program for product testing and verification of products earning the ENERGY STAR will be developed and implemented.
- A new effort to recognize super efficient products.

Q: What are the enhancements to the National Building Energy Rating Program?

A: A National Building Rating Program is important to helping building owners understand the efficiency of homes and buildings and the set of cost-effective improvements and for accountability in measuring the energy savings resulting from the ARRA funding. The National Building Rating Program will be enhanced through expanded rating tools, new building improvement assessment tools, and labels to communicate this information.

Q: What are the near-term implications of the agreement for EPA and DOE?

A: DOE and EPA will work quickly to put this agreement into action in the following ways:

- Outline and implement key enhancements to the ENERGY STAR products program in the areas of
 - (1) product testing and verification,
 - (2) revisions to existing ENERGY STAR specifications so as to ensure that ENERGY STAR recognizes top performing products, and
 - (3) other changes necessary so that ENERGY STAR represents the top product models as outlined in the agreement.
 - (4) Developing options for new “best in class” labeling program
 - Outline and implement key enhancements to the National Building Energy Rating System particularly where important to assist in use of ARRA funding.
- More details on the specific steps and timelines will be forthcoming.

Q: When will stakeholders know the fuller extent and timing of the ENERGY STAR program enhancements and which product categories may be affected?

A: A proposed plan for an initial set of enhancements to the Energy Star program including initial steps, affected products, and timelines will be developed and shared **within the next 2 months**. This plan will address priority areas for specification revisions, plans for the comprehensive product testing and verification, and other changes necessary to maintain the integrity of the ENERGY STAR label.

Q: How will coordination between the Agencies take place?

A: A new Governing Council is established under the agreement consisting of the Assistant Secretary for EERE at the DOE and the Assistant Administrator for OAR at the EPA. The Governing Council will provide overall direction on management and policy issues and will meet quarterly to address key issues. Staff coordination will include annual planning meetings and ongoing coordination as appropriate. Annual planning meetings will establish work plans, milestones, and timelines for each Agency for the two programs. **The first Annual Plan for the Partnership will be completed by January 2010.**

Q: What are the opportunities for stakeholder involvement?

A: Stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback to the new Governing Council on the ENERGY STAR program and the National Building Rating Program twice a year in addition to the opportunities stakeholders have to provide comment through the routine operation of these programs.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

Products

Q: What does this agreement mean for household appliances, water heaters, windows and other ENERGY STAR product categories managed by the DOE?

A: EPA will be brand manager for the ENERGY STAR products program. This includes managing manufacturer agreements, specification development, and marketing and outreach. EPA will manage these efforts with technical support from DOE in areas such as product testing and verification, leveraging the substantial ongoing DOE work with the minimum efficiency standards program and test procedure development. **A transition plan of key activities related to these product areas will be developed by EPA and DOE and shared with stakeholders over the next 2 months.**

Q: What does this agreement mean for ENERGY STAR and solid state lighting?

A: EPA will be brand manager and Agency lead for the ENERGY STAR products program. This includes managing manufacturer agreements, specification development, and marketing and outreach. EPA will manage these efforts with technical support from DOE in areas such as product testing and verification, leveraging the substantial ongoing DOE work with R&D, product testing, and test procedure development. EPA and DOE will work expeditiously to integrate their existing efforts across residential lighting. An integrated approach to ENERGY STAR residential lighting program will be developed for industry and other stakeholder comment that recognizes the importance of both whole fixture-based and light source-based approaches for measuring lighting energy efficiency. This proposal will guide future ENERGY STAR specifications for fixtures and bulbs. **This proposal will be provided for comment within 2 months.**

Q: What is the timing and scope of the new “best in class” program?

A: The new “best in class” program, sometimes referred to as Superstar, will be explored in the coming months as resources are available. It will be developed based on market research with expert input from brand strategy consultants. Stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide feedback into this process.

Buildings

Q: What is the future of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR under this agreement.

A: Home Performance with ENERGY STAR is a whole home retrofit program sponsored by a growing number of organizations across the country each year in partnership with EPA and DOE. This program delivers home energy savings of 20% or more and utilizes trained, certified contractors and quality assurance protocols as key elements of providing these savings. This program is a key component of the Administration’s plan to expand home energy retrofits and EPA will continue to support its adoption and implementation. EPA and DOE will collaborate on improvements to this program over time particularly in the areas of certification programs for home improvement professionals, assessment tools, and quality assurance and quality control mechanisms.

Q: What does the agreement mean for the ENERGY STAR label on buildings?

A: EPA will be the lead agency to determine ENERGY STAR specifications for buildings and homes and continue its efforts to encourage key stakeholders to build new buildings to these levels and improve existing buildings. EPA will manage revisions to these specifications as appropriate, with technical support from DOE and consistent with the National Building Rating Program.

Q: What does this mean for EPA’s Portfolio Manager for commercial building benchmarking?

A: Portfolio Manager is an important building benchmarking tool being used by thousands of organizations. This important program will be maintained, strengthened and expanded during the coming years. The “operational ratings” offered through Portfolio Manager will be integrated into the National Building Rating program. EPA and DOE will promote the use of Portfolio Manager through their various program efforts. These efforts include EPA’s ENERGY STAR commercial partnership and recognition programs and DOE’s ARRA efforts. EPA and DOE will consult on enhancements to Portfolio Manager and ensure that enhancements allow stakeholders sufficient time to comment on and adopt these enhancements.

Q: What does this mean for EPA’s Home Energy Yardstick?

A: Similar to Portfolio Manager, Yardstick will be strengthened by being integrated into DOE’s National Building Rating Program.

Q: What does this mean for DOE’s E-Scale?

A: DOE’s E-Scale will be integrated into the National Building Rating Program.

Q: What does this mean for DOE’s Building America program?

A: Building America will provide core technical support for EPA’s Energy Star for New Homes and Home Performance with Energy Star.

Other

Q: What does this mean for Agency roles and responsibilities as outlined in Waxman-Markey on the energy efficiency title?

A: EPA and DOE will brief Congress on this new agreement and the roles and responsibilities of each Agency. EPA and DOE will request that any new legislation relevant to the two programs assign roles and responsibilities to the EPA/DOE Partnership.

Q: What does the agreement mean for the EPA Climate Choice Pilot Program?

A: The work done to date on the Climate Choice program will be incorporated into discussions on a new “best in class” program.