

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460



OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

November 9, 2007

Dear ENERGY STAR[®] Exit Sign Partner or Other Interested Party:

The purpose of this letter is to convey EPA's final decision to suspend (i.e. discontinue) the ENERGY STAR specification for exit signs effective May 1, 2008. This decision was prompted by federal standards established as part of the Energy Policy Act (EPAAct) of 2005 and is made after careful consideration of input from stakeholders.

EPA wishes to thank those stakeholders who provided feedback on this issue. Ten responses to our request for comment were submitted to EPA for review and consideration. While nine stakeholders encouraged EPA to maintain the specification, seven of these stakeholders saw the need for significant revision to the specification in order to assure its relevance given EPAAct 2005.

EPA proposed to suspend the specification, rather than revise it at this time, because research indicates that the performance and longevity of signs could be compromised if the input power demand is driven below five watts per sign. Setting a specification such that product performance is not maintained or enhanced would be inconsistent with ENERGY STAR program guiding principles. And although photo- and radio-luminescent exit signs could meet a more stringent specification, an ENERGY STAR specification that only these technologies could meet would not be acceptable given that these signs are not appropriate for all applications. Although EPA has decided to move forward with its decision to suspend the ENERGY STAR program for exit signs, as energy efficient technologies evolve, improve, and mature, if there is an opportunity for ENERGY STAR to play a role in the exit sign marketplace, then EPA may consider a revised specification at that time.

Clarification of How Exit Signs are Addressed in EPAAct

Comments submitted by some stakeholders on EPA's proposal to suspend the exit sign specification suggest there is some confusion over how exit signs are treated in EPAAct. Specifically, there is a misconception that EPAAct has effectively banned the sale of exit signs using photoluminescent or radioluminescent technologies. In this letter, EPA would like to provide additional clarification on how EPAAct addresses exit signs. Please note that this information is not meant to summarize EPAAct comprehensively. However, DOE addressed this issue in its December 8, 2006, final rule adopting the EPAAct standards. Stakeholders are encouraged to review EPAAct and DOE's rule thoroughly to understand their impacts, and may contact Michael McCabe at the Department of Energy (202-586-9127, michael.mccabe@ee.doe.gov) with any specific questions.

Below is a link to the Library of Congress Web site, where stakeholders can review EPAAct, specifically Section 135, which addresses illuminated exit signs:

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?c109:6:./temp/~c1098wYVST:e105505>.

Following is an excerpt from Section 135:

*(37) The term 'illuminated exit sign' means a sign that--
(A) is designed to be permanently fixed in place to identify an exit; and
(B) consists of an electrically powered integral light source that--
(i) illuminates the legend 'EXIT' and any directional indicators; and
(ii) provides contrast between the legend, any directional indicators,
and the background.*

(w) Illuminated Exit Signs- An illuminated exit sign manufactured on or after January 1, 2006, shall meet the version 2.0 Energy Star Program performance requirements for illuminated exit signs prescribed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

In addition, below is a link to the DOE Energy Conservation Standards Web site, where stakeholders can review the December 8, 2006, final rule regarding EAct standards, including illuminated exit signs:

http://www.eere.energy.gov/buildings/appliance_standards/notices_rules.html.

The following is an excerpt from DOE's December 8, 2006, final rule:

'Photo luminescent products are not covered equipment, and DOE test procedures and energy conservation standards do not apply to or affect these products.

Since EAct does not regulate exit signs that fall outside of this definition of an "illuminated exit sign," EPA expects that non-electrically powered signs or those that lack an integral light source will continue to play an important role in the market as well as offer another energy-efficient option to purchasers. EPA encourages stakeholders to review EAct, contact DOE with any questions, and ensure that your organization's characterizations about the types of exit signs permitted for sale in the US are accurate. To that end, EPA will continue to provide information on energy-efficient exit signs of all technologies on the ENERGY STAR Web site.

Key Changes and Dates for Suspension of ENERGY STAR for Exit Signs

As of May 1, 2008, the main exit signs page on the ENERGY STAR Web site will be removed, including partner and product lists, and qualifying product information forms. The Web site will continue to include the ENERGY STAR Eligibility Criteria and testing procedures, which may be cited in the Department of Energy's rules, as a link from the main product page (www.energystar.gov). In addition, EPA will continue to include general information (e.g., sample procurement language and savings calculators) on its Web site regarding energy-efficient exit signs for use by procurement officials and others.

The suspension of the ENERGY STAR specification for exit signs has several important implications for EPA and stakeholders. The table below provides these key changes and their effective dates:

Key Changes:	Effective Dates:
EPA will no longer accept new Partnership Agreements for exit signs.	November 9, 2007
EPA will no longer accept new qualifying product information from exit sign partners.	November 9, 2007
Exit sign manufacturers may no longer refer to themselves as	April 30, 2008

ENERGY STAR partners.	
Exit sign manufacturers must discontinue use of the ENERGY STAR name and mark on product literature, product packaging, and the manufacturer's Web site. (i.e., manufacturers may not apply the mark to new materials after April 30, 2008; EPA understands that existing stock produced prior to April 30 will bear the ENERGY STAR mark as it filters through the distribution channel.)	April 30, 2008
EPA will no longer maintain and/or display an exit sign Web page with partner and product listings on its ENERGY STAR Web site.	May 1, 2008

Please note that EPA has given manufacturers approximately six months to discontinue use of the ENERGY STAR name and mark on any previously qualified exit sign materials. During this transition time, EPA will continue to recognize ENERGY STAR qualified exit signs and their manufacturers at www.energystar.gov. However, at the end of this transition time, on April 30, 2008, manufacturers must cease using the ENERGY STAR name and mark in association with all previously qualified exit sign models.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached by phone at (206) 553-6377 or by email at Fanara.andrew@epa.gov.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in and support of ENERGY STAR over the years. You have been an important part of ENERGY STAR's success and I look forward to working together again in the future.

Regards,



Andrew Fanara
ENERGY STAR Program Manager
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency