

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



OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

May 4, 2009

Dear Programmable Thermostat Manufacturer or Other Interested Stakeholder:

The purpose of this letter is to notify programmable thermostat stakeholders of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) intention to sunset the Version 1.2 ENERGY STAR® Programmable Thermostat specification as scheduled on December 31, 2009 and to outline EPA's next steps with programmable thermostats. EPA will also issue a letter later this month detailing the specific timeline associated with sunseting the ENERGY STAR specification.

EPA recognizes the potential for programmable thermostats (PTs) to save significant amounts of energy. We remain committed to cooperating with industry and other experts to structure a program that works toward this end. At this point we see that the best next step is to proceed as outlined in a February 2008 decision letter on PTs to sunset the current specification while we continue to work to design and implement an improved program. This is for the following reasons:

- Significant questions have been raised as to the net energy savings and environmental benefits being achieved with the current set of ENERGY STAR qualifying PTs through a number of field studies as discussed in the February 2008 decision letter.
- EPA established December 31, 2009 as a sunset date for the ENERGY STAR PT specification: 1) in light of a January 2007 Gas Networks study that demonstrated savings from PTs under some circumstances; 2) to allow some ENERGY STAR partners to complete their programs which extended into 2009 and that incorporated ENERGY STAR PTs; and 3) to see if an enhanced educational effort on proper use could improve the effectiveness of the program.
- EPA has been unable to confirm any improvement in terms of the savings delivered by programmable thermostats and has no credible basis for continuing to extend the current ENERGY STAR specification.
- No new approach has been developed for differentiating thermostats that reliably and easily assist homeowners in saving energy (and one is not imminent) as EPA had outlined would need to be finalized by March, 2009 so as to avoid sunseting the specification.

Despite sunseting the specification, EPA plans to continue to advance energy efficiency through programmable thermostats in the following ways:

- Continue to work with industry to develop a new ENERGY STAR specification that differentiates products with demonstrated ease-of-use features so as to minimize the potential for user interface issues to reduce energy savings. EPA will be exploring the usability of PT products, functionalities that improve user savings, and functionalities that offer consumers further comfort, communication, and control of energy costs.
- Continue to educate homeowners about the energy savings associated with the proper use of these devices. Programmable thermostat education will be integrated into this year's *Change the World, Start with ENERGY STAR* campaign. EPA will continue to promote and provide the Agency's educational materials and tools at www.energystar.gov.

During the week of May 18, 2009, EPA plans to issue a letter to PT partners outlining the milestones associated with sunsetting the specification. If you are aware of new studies or other information demonstrating PT effectiveness in terms of energy savings, we would appreciate receiving it prior to this date.

EPA appreciates the efforts programmable thermostat partners have made to deliver ENERGY STAR qualified products to consumers and to educate consumers regarding their proper use. We look forward to continuing our work to hone the ENERGY STAR program for these products and to staying in touch with you on any progress. Please feel free to share your comments or concerns with me at 202-343-9120 or kaplan.katharine@epa.gov and Christina Chang, ICF International, at 202-862-1206 or cchang@icfi.com.

Sincerely,



Katharine Kaplan
US EPA, ENERGY STAR Product Development