

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



OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

July 1, 2009

Dear ENERGY STAR® Water Cooler Stakeholder:

With this letter, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is launching the revision of the Version 1.1 ENERGY STAR specification for Water Coolers. EPA's primary intent in revisiting this specification is to expand the requirements to bottle-less water coolers. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide comments on this proposed change, as well as other parts of the specification that might need clarification or revision. Comments and suggestions must be submitted to EPA by July 17, 2009 to be considered during the development of the Draft 1 specification. This letter frames the expected scope of this revision, and invites your participation in the revision process.

Expected Scope of Revision

Expansion of Qualified Product Types

Since the ENERGY STAR Bottled Water Cooler specification was launched on September 1, 2000, the market for bottle-less water coolers has grown significantly, representing as much as 50% of total annual water cooler sales for some manufacturers. One type of bottle-less water cooler in particular, the Point of Use (POU) cooler, is widely available, and many of the top water cooler manufacturers offer several POU models for purchase. Several manufacturers of POU's, as well as other types of bottle-less water coolers, have requested that EPA expand the existing specification to allow bottle-less water coolers to qualify for ENERGY STAR. EPA plans to revise the definition of a qualifying water cooler to permit the qualification of bottle-less devices. Current performance requirements will also be reviewed to determine whether existing levels continue to be appropriate.

In addition, EPA intends to clarify the definition for the Standby Condition. This will specifically allow units that employ "on demand" heating or cooling of water to qualify for the ENERGY STAR label, as opposed to only permitting qualification of those that maintain hot and cold water in tanks.

Reconsideration of Standby-only Testing

The current test procedure for ENERGY STAR qualification is intended to measure only the energy used to maintain hot and cold water during an extended period when no water is withdrawn. It does not address energy use associated with supplying or treating water. EPA is aware that some bottle-less water coolers use additional energy for water generation or treatment. Across the ENERGY STAR program, EPA is moving toward addressing energy consumption in all modes of operation, and will consider if this approach is reasonable for Water Coolers, or if a simple standby test should be maintained. Stakeholder comments on this element and supporting data are particularly encouraged.

Requirement for Testing as Shipped

EPA has been advised that some bottled water coolers have been tested at hot/cold water temperature settings that are different than those at which the units are shipped. To assure that a water cooler meets ENERGY STAR criteria when it is received by end users, EPA plans to add a requirement that units be tested at the same settings as they are shipped.

Anticipated Next Steps

Throughout the specification development process, EPA will solicit input from all stakeholders via drafts, e-mail updates, and stakeholder meetings, as necessary. Stakeholders are encouraged to comment on the proposed revisions mentioned above, as well as other elements of the specification that may require reconsideration or updating. **Comments are requested by July 17, 2009** and may be sent to WaterCoolers@energystar.gov. Once EPA has had the opportunity to carefully consider any comments received, a Draft 1 specification will be distributed for stakeholders' review and comment. Along with the Draft 1 document, EPA will also provide a proposed timeline for completing revisions to the specification. All specification updates will be posted at www.energystar.gov/RevisedSpecs. (Select "Water Coolers.")

The exchange of ideas and information between EPA, industry, and other interested parties is critical to the success of ENERGY STAR. Your input is very valuable during this specification review process. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Darcy Martinez, ICF International, at (202) 862-1234 or dmartinez@icfi.com, or you may reach me at (202) 343-9123 or Ryan.Steven@epa.gov.

Thank you for your continued support of ENERGY STAR. I look forward to working with you over the next several months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve J. Ryan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

Steve Ryan, U.S. EPA
ENERGY STAR Product Development