



May 8, 2019

US Environmental Protection Agency
Climate Protection Partnerships Division
ENERGY STAR
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC, 20460 US
Comments submitted via email: energystarhomes@energystar.gov

Dear ENERGY STAR Team:

I respectfully submit comments on proposed changes to the eligibility requirements for organizations seeking recognition as a Verification Oversight Organization (VOO) for the ENERGY STAR Certified Homes Program. In summary, my comments are as follows. First, EPA should apply consistent and equal rules when selecting VOOs, regardless of tax status. Second, the software approval process to calculate ENERGY STAR for Homes compliance should rest with a single organization for consistency and the most competent organization to make that software approval is the US Department of Energy.

VOO Eligibility Requirements

I support EPA recognizing more than one VOO for the ENERGY STAR program. Builders and ultimately home buyers will benefit from their being more competition and choice. Competition will drive innovation, reduce costs, and improve the reliability of energy ratings. However, competition requires a level playing field which these eligibility requirements fail to provide. The proposal to allow organizations to be eligible either because they are a non-profit or if they have 17065-accreditation is unfair and will stifle competition because it is so uneven. As an alternative, I propose that EPA implement a transition period where eligible VOOs to operate in a manner consistent with 17065 principles. And consistent with other EPA programs, EPA can provide oversight of the VOOS to audit and ensure that they remain 17065-compliant. If this transition period is a success, EPA can move to requiring VOOs to obtain 17065-accreditation.

This even-handed approach to VOOs is critical to the ENERGY STAR brand and to ensure a consistent nationwide decision for compliance verification. If EPA embraces these 17065 operational requirements across all VOOs, the agency will send a clear message that the ENERGY STAR label is a rigorous, credible validation of energy efficiency and high-performance. Further, these requirements will help EPA improve the consistency and reliability of home ratings across all builders and climate zones.

Software Accreditation

EPA's proposal to accredit software is unacceptable. Instead, VOOs be required to use "U.S. Department of Energy-approved energy modeling software programs." or some other entity that is not conflicted

such as UL. Such a recommendation is consistent with DOE's approval of energy modeling software programs used to verify compliance with the energy efficiency requirements for the tax credit under section 45L of the Internal Revenue Code (§ 45L). DOE currently reviews and approves energy modeling software to calculate energy efficiency for the federal 45L tax credit, the agency could also approve software that calculates ERI for use with EPA's ENERGY STAR program. I believe this proposal has two strong benefits. First, it keeps the authority to approve energy modeling software programs with a single entity which will help promote consistency in energy modeling across the industry. Second, it makes the approval of software independent from the VOOs that oversee the certification to help ensure impartiality in software approvals.

Regards,
P. Dean Potter
Vice President, Home Production & Quality Assurance Processes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Dean Potter", written in a cursive style.