

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



OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

March 20, 2012

Dear Set-top Box Equipment Manufacturer, Service Provider or Other Interested Party:

Last year, through an open stakeholder process, EPA established the ENERGY STAR[®] Specification for Set-top Boxes (STBs), Versions 3.0 and 4.0, with effective dates of September 1, 2012, and July 1, 2013, respectively. At the time of development, EPA committed to tracking this market and revisiting the Version 4.0 requirements before they went into effect to ensure that the requirements aligned with the evolution of the market and performance of products in this quickly developing product category.

EPA has completed its initial review and has identified the following issues that the Agency believes warrant consideration:

- **Test Method:** The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) are both developing U.S. test methods to measure STB energy consumption. The STB Specification may be revised to reference one or more of these test methods. (The test methods are all based on the ENERGY STAR test method, so EPA anticipates that this referencing would result in little, if any, modifications to existing procedures.)
 - The CEA test method (CEA-2043), which is expected to be finalized in Fall 2012, will harmonize with IEC 62087 and CSA C380-11, and will include provisions for testing multiple tuners and multi-room configurations.
 - The DOE test method is expected to be finalized in Spring 2013, with a proposal released for comment in Fall 2012. The test procedure is expected to be based on existing test procedures (including ENERGY STAR and CEA-2043), but once it becomes effective it will be the sole method for recording or advertising the energy use or efficiency of an STB in the United States.

- **Multi-room Configurations:** The Version 4.0 specification provides for the testing and qualification of multi-room configurations including thin-client devices, and several manufacturers are now marketing multi-room STBs. However, as additional functionality is transferred from a thin client (or even zero-client) to the centralized multi-room box,

there is a concern that the multi-room allowance may be insufficient for products to qualify.

- **Customer-premises Equipment:** The Version 3.0 and 4.0 specifications exclude the testing of low-noise block downconverters (LNBS) used with satellite systems and sometimes powered by the STB. Some stakeholders have expressed concern that this exclusion favors satellite STBs over other technologies; however, several other STB technologies also include customer-premises equipment that could contribute to the total energy consumption experienced by the end-user.
- **Timeline:** EPA intends to work closely with stakeholders to make any refinements to the Version 4.0 requirements through the summer, beginning with the release of initial proposed refinements in May. EPA will complete this stakeholder effort by August of this year to maintain the July 2013 effective date for the updated Version 4.1.

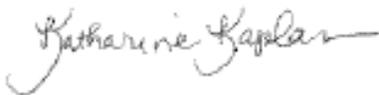
Please submit comments on the issues above to stbs@energystar.gov by Friday, April 13, 2012. EPA will also host a **webinar to discuss the issues for consideration in Version 4.1 and next steps on Thursday, April 5, 2012, from 12 to 2pm Eastern Time**. Please RSVP by emailing stbs@energystar.gov by Friday, March 30, to receive call-in information.

On behalf of EPA, I appreciate your participation in this effort. EPA looks forward to continuing to work with stakeholders through subsequent discussion and analysis to these aspects of the Version 4.1 ENERGY STAR STB specification. The exchange of ideas and information between EPA, product manufacturers, and other interested parties is critical to our success. If you know of others who may be interested in participating in this effort, please forward this announcement and encourage them to send their contact information to stbs@energystar.gov to be added to the stakeholder contact list.

Please direct any specific questions to Katharine Kaplan, at kaplan.katharine@epa.gov, or 202-343-9120, or Matt Malinowski, ICF International, at mmalinowski@icfi.com or 202-862-2693.

We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,



Katharine Kaplan
EPA Team Lead, ENERGY STAR Product Development