

**Preliminary Discussion Paper:  
Piloting Addressing Broader Environmental Objectives through the ENERGY  
STAR Program**

**Document Purpose**

This document is intended to relay to key stakeholders, most notably, the EPEAT Board of Advisors, a marketplace need, a potential set of options for meeting those needs, and to establish a process for discussing and vetting those opportunities.

**Context**

Last year alone, Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, prevented 40 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions—equivalent to the emissions from 27 million vehicles—and saved more than \$16 billion on their utility bills. ENERGY STAR has become an important consumer influencer with over 75% awareness and with many consumers with ENERGY STAR experience willing to recommend ENERGY STAR to their associates. Central to the program's success to date is the principle that ENERGY STAR qualified products deliver energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions while meeting all other consumer expectations in terms of product performance and features (i.e., savings without sacrifice). Increasingly, consumers expect the products they purchase to be environmentally friendly through the product life cycle. EPA is initiating a discussion with stakeholders to explore ways in which the ENERGY STAR Program might address product attributes such as life cycle energy use and other environmental characteristics (e.g., reduced toxins) so as to ensure that products that display the ENERGY STAR label continue to meet consumer expectations.

**Pilot Approach Discussion**

EPA/Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) recognizes that there are a range of ways in which the ENERGY STAR Program might help meet consumer expectations in terms of “greener” products.

On a product by product basis, the program has a history of addressing product attributes beyond energy efficiency as consumer expectations warranted. For example, given increasing concern regarding mercury in CFL light bulbs, EPA/OAR has added requirements to the ENERGY STAR Residential Fixture specification limiting mercury content. Incorporating a broader range of environmental requirements into ENERGY STAR specifications is one option EPA is interested in exploring. EPA/OAR recognizes the importance of developing and/or referencing credible criteria as well as verifying that these criteria have been met.

Along these lines, in the context of a revision to the ENERGY STAR requirements for monitors and other displays, EPA/OAR recently proposed that the program address fluorinated gases produced during the manufacture of LCDs through a requirement that products that earn the ENERGY STAR capture and recycle or destroy the vast majority of these gases. Capture of these gases offers a reduction potential of nearly 3 billion pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> beyond reductions associated with current ENERGY STAR

requirements. EPA has developed a more detailed problem statement and possible paths forward for presentation and discussion with display stakeholders.

Ultimately, when a viable, vetted product protocol is available, EPA/OAR envisions using such a tool to assess the embodied energy of products addressed by the ENERGY STAR program. This could allow for a more refined and holistic product by product examination over that which is discussed above. However, absent a viable product protocol, EPA/OAR is looking at what it can do now to even more significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions of a product and also avoid unintended consequences (i.e., recognizing a product as better for the climate when manufacturing or other life cycle emissions may significantly reduce the climate benefit of the product). EPA/OAR is developing a set of criteria that will allow for the prioritization of product categories and opportunities for reducing embodied energy.

An alternative to addressing other environmental attributes as part of an ENERGY STAR product specification is to highlight or recognize those ENERGY STAR qualified products that deliver added environmental benefit.

This recognition could take a range of forms from highlighting the fact that some ENERGY STAR products also meet additional required criteria (e.g., reduced embodied energy of a display through manufacturing, transport, or packaging improvements, for example, and/or are EPEAT registered) on the ENERGY STAR qualified product list and/or on an independent page for partners that have met additional criteria to offering a differentiated product designation (i.e., a label). In this context, EPA is weighing various program implications including issues associated with consumer education.

### **Next Steps**

EPA/OAR anticipates inviting interested stakeholders to participate in a series of discussions regarding structure, requirements, and recognition (i.e., web recognition vs. new label) beginning in early December and continuing through the first quarter of 2009 with the aim of launching a pilot no later than April 2009. EPA/OAR welcomes the involvement of the EPEAT Board of Advisors in these discussions.

### **Questions**

Katharine Kaplan, (202) 343-9120, [kaplan.katharine@epa.gov](mailto:kaplan.katharine@epa.gov)