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Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

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ENERGY STAR

In 1992, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced ENERGY STAR, under the authority of the Clean Air Act Section 103(g), as a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products. Computers and monitors were the first labeled products. Throughout 1995, EPA expanded the program to additional office equipment products and residential heating and cooling equipment. In 1996, EPA joined with the Department of Energy (DOE) to expand the labeling program to additional product categories.

Today, ENERGY STAR remains a joint EPA-DOE program that encompasses more than 75 product types (e.g., clothes washers, refrigerators) grouped into 10 product categories (e.g., home appliances, lighting). There are numerous synergies between ENERGY STAR and DOE's Appliance Standards Program for setting minimum energy efficiency standards. For example, 30 of the more than 75 product types covered under ENERGY STAR are also covered under DOE's Appliance Standards Program. ENERGY STAR also includes efforts to improve the efficiency of new and existing homes, commercial buildings, and industrial facilities.

In 2005, Congress enacted the Energy Policy Act (EPAct). Section 131 of the Act amends Section 324 of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, and directs EPA and DOE to implement "a voluntary program to identify and promote energy-efficient products and buildings in order to reduce energy consumption, improve energy security, and reduce pollution through voluntary labeling of other forms of communication about products and buildings that meet the highest energy efficiency standards." The Act further directs EPA and DOE to work jointly on the program and states that the responsibilities under the program "shall be divided between the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency in accordance with the terms of applicable agreements between those agencies." (42 USC Section 6294a)

On September 30, 2009, DOE and EPA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), designating EPA as the lead agency and brand manager for the ENERGY STAR program. EPA is also tasked to work with program partners to increase public awareness of and access to ENERGY STAR labeled products. Under this MOU, DOE's primary role is to work with the EPA, develop Federal test procedures, and administer a product verifying testing program.

DOE and EPA coordinate regularly on these elements through weekly calls as well as periodic meetings. In addition, DOE and EPA jointly develop an annual work plan for upcoming test procedure and specification revisions. DOE reviews all updates to ENERGY STAR specifications prior to release by EPA, ensuring that the specification aligns with DOE energy conservation standards, where applicable. DOE also shares test data and technical information with EPA to ensure that both agencies have the best set of data to use in the ENERGY STAR product development process. Finally, DOE and EPA coordinate on verification testing to ensure there is not a duplication of government resources.

We look forward to working with Congress to ensure our efforts provide value to American families and businesses.