

U.S. EPA, DOE Announce Changes to Bolster Energy Star Program

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy today jointly announced changes to the Energy Star product certification process to ensure that only products meeting the program requirements can receive an Energy Star label. These changes accelerate steps DOE and EPA have initiated over the past several months to bolster the verification, testing and enforcement aspects of the Energy Star program.

"The Energy Star program started out small and has grown quickly, and now the brand is immensely valuable to consumers and businesses," said Gina McCarthy, EPA Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation. "The safeguards we're putting into effect are essential for the millions of consumers who rely on Energy Star products to help save energy, money and the environment."

"Consumers trust the Energy Star brand to save them money and reduce carbon pollution," said Cathy Zoi, DOE Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. "The steps we are taking to strengthen the program will ensure that Energy Star continues to be the hallmark for energy efficiency in the years to come."

Effective immediately, manufacturers wishing to qualify their products as Energy Star must submit complete lab reports and results for review and approval by EPA prior to labeling. Following a thorough review of the Energy Star qualification approval process, EPA has strengthened its approval systems and is no longer relying on an automated approval process. All new qualification applications will be reviewed and approved individually by EPA. EPA will begin accepting new applications by the end of the week.

Additionally, companies applying to be program partners will not be able to access the Energy Star certification mark until EPA has approved a specific Energy Star-qualified product submitted by the company.

EPA and DOE are further strengthening the certification process with a requirement effective at the end of the year that all manufacturers must submit test results from an approved, accredited lab for any product seeking the Energy Star label. Testing in an accredited lab is currently required for certain product categories including windows, doors, skylights and compact fluorescent lighting. The new process will extend the requirement to each of the more than 60 eligible product categories under the Energy Star program.

These efforts are in addition to enforcement and testing procedures already in place to ensure compliance with Energy Star specifications. The Department of Energy is conducting off-the-shelf product testing for some of the most common household appliances and a recent Inspector General audit found that 98 percent of products tested fully complied with Energy Star requirements.

The EPA and DOE are committed to continually strengthening and improving the Energy Star program, which provides information to consumers to help identify the most energy efficient products on the market that will save them money and reduce carbon pollution.

The Energy Star program outlined these steps in detail for EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson and DOE Secretary Steven Chu in an April 2 memo. More information: <http://www.energystar.gov>