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August 24, 2023

Via E-Mail

Ann Bailey, Director  
ENERGY STAR Product Labeling  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
ENERGY STAR Appliance Program

MostEfficient@energystar.gov

Re: ENERGY STAR Proposed Recognition Criteria for Most Efficient 2024

Dear Ms. Bailey:

On behalf of the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM), I would like to provide our comments on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed recognition criteria for ENERGY STAR Most Efficient 2024. AHAM continues to be concerned about EPA's failure to provide the basic data upon which it relies to make Most Efficient recognition criteria proposals. This is inconsistent with EPA's stated procedures for the amendment of eligibility criteria for the underlying product specifications and its goal of providing transparent analysis to stakeholders.

AHAM supports EPA and the Department of Energy (DOE) in their efforts to provide incentives to manufacturers, retailers, and consumers for energy efficiency improvement, as long as product performance can be maintained for the consumer. But AHAM is concerned that EPA continues to establish Most Efficient criteria in a manner inconsistent with EPA's Guiding Principles for the ENERGY STAR program (ENERGY STAR Guiding Principles) and its Standard Operating Procedure for Revising or Establishing an ENERGY STAR Product Specification (Standard Operating Procedure).

EPA has offered little analysis and no supporting data to indicate how or why it has chosen the eligibility criteria in the proposal. For example, there is no analysis or data regarding EPA's proposal to select 45 dB(A) as the sound limit for room air conditioners. In fact, there is no data-based justification as to why EPA is introducing a sound performance requirement. There is also insufficient cost or payback data to justify the levels proposed.

This failure to provide supporting data is inconsistent with the ENERGY STAR Standard Operating Procedure. The Standard Operating Procedure states that in revising specifications, "[a]t the earliest possible point in the process, EPA shares data relied upon in specification development, including publicly-available performance data (or the source where large data sets

are used), the Agency’s payback analysis in cases where a cost differential for more efficient products exists, and an estimate of savings.” There is no reason EPA should not follow that same practice of providing data upon which it relied in its development of Most Efficient criteria.

Moreover, AHAM continues to oppose EPA’s losing the Most Efficient program’s focus on energy efficiency. In setting requirements outside of energy efficiency, EPA threatens overall performance due to the design tradeoffs necessary to meet these additional requirements. Though performance is a key factor that should be protected, the better way to address performance is by ensuring that the Most Efficient levels EPA selects do not threaten performance.

AHAM has concerns over the proposed Most Efficient requirements for specific products, in particular room air conditioners. EPA states that products with heating capability must report the heating mode efficiency based on a to-be-developed heating mode test procedures for room air conditioners. EPA further stated that the agency will be working with stakeholders to develop this test procedure with the goal of finalizing it later this year. AHAM firmly believes that EPA should ensure that a technically sound test procedure to measure heating mode is in place before requiring reporting. AHAM notes that it is developing a RAC-2 test procedure that will include provisions on room air conditioners with heating capability. EPA should remain aware of and monitor test development efforts as it develops its criteria.

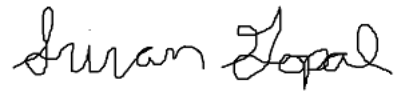
AHAM also has concerns over the terminology used in the room air conditioner proposal. Specifically, EPA has a “sound level” requirement of 45 dB(A) for the lowest operational setting. “Sound level” may not be the correct terminology in this instance because it does not have a well-established meaning. There are many different types of sound measurements, with “sound power” and “sound pressure” being the most common. AHAM does not have a suggestion for EPA at this point, as the task force developing the RAC-2 test procedure is still working through the issue. Nevertheless, at this point AHAM does want to point out that “sound level” is not a commonly used term in this context.<sup>1</sup>

AHAM appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on EPA’s proposed recognition criteria for ENERGY STAR Most Efficient 2024 and would be glad to further discuss these matters should you so request.

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<sup>1</sup> AHAM notes one other example of unclear drafting found in the Most Efficient proposals. For refrigeration products, the recognition criteria states that “[f]or standard-size refrigerator-freezers other than top freezers, product must be at least 27% more efficient than federal requirements.” This created some confusion among AHAM members, because it implies that all of these product categories will have recognition criteria that are 27% above their respective federal standards. Upon examining the equations, this is not the case. AHAM recognizes that this discrepancy in requirements is not particularly new in the 2024 proposal, but believes EPA could have clearer wording to summarize the recognition criteria for the multiple product categories that fall within the quoted statement.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sriram Gopal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sriram Gopal  
Director, Technology and Environmental Policy

**About AHAM:** AHAM represents more than 150 member companies that manufacture 90% of the major, portable and floor care appliances shipped for sale in the U.S. Home appliances are the heart of the home, and AHAM members provide safe, innovative, sustainable and efficient products that enhance consumers' lives. The home appliance industry is a significant segment of the economy, measured by the contributions of home appliance manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers to the U.S. economy. In all, the industry drives nearly \$200 billion in economic output throughout the U.S. and manufactures products with a factory shipment value of more than \$50 billion.