

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

5 CFR Chapter XXII

10 CFR Chapters II, III, X

Reducing Regulatory Burden

AGENCY: Office of the General Counsel, Department of Energy.

ACTION: Request for information.

SUMMARY: As part of its implementation of Executive Order 13563, "Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review," issued by the President on January 18, 2011, the Department of Energy (Department or DOE) is seeking comments and information from interested parties to assist DOE in reviewing its existing regulations to determine whether any such regulations should be modified, streamlined, expanded, or repealed. The purpose of DOE's review is to make the agency's regulatory program more effective and less burdensome in achieving its regulatory objectives.

DATES: Written comments and information are requested on or before May 29, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are encouraged to submit comments, identified by "Regulatory Burden RFI," by any of the following methods:

Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Email: Regulatory.Review@hq.doe.gov. Include "Regulatory Burden RFI" in the subject line of the message.

Mail: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of the General Counsel, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Room 6A245, Washington, DC 20585.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents, or comments received, go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

That Department's plan for retrospective review of its regulations can be accessed at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/21stcenturygov/actions/21st-century-regulatory-system>.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Daniel Cohen, Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation, and Energy Efficiency, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of the General Counsel, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585. Email: Regulatory.Review@hq.doe.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 18, 2011, the President issued Executive Order 13563, "Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review," to ensure that Federal regulations seek more affordable, less intrusive means to achieve policy goals, and that agencies give careful consideration to the benefits and costs of those regulations. To that end, the Executive Order requires, among other things, that:

- Agencies propose or adopt a regulation only upon a reasoned determination that its benefits justify its costs; and that agencies tailor regulations to impose the least burden on society, consistent with obtaining the regulatory objectives, taking into account, among other things, and to the extent practicable, the costs of cumulative regulations; and that, consistent with applicable law, agencies select, in choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, those approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages; distributive impacts; and equity).

- The regulatory process encourages public participation and an open exchange of views, with an opportunity for the public to comment.

- Agencies coordinate, simplify, and harmonize regulations to reduce costs and promote certainty for businesses and the public.

- Agencies consider low-cost approaches that reduce burdens and maintain flexibility.

- Regulations be guided by objective scientific evidence.

Additionally, the Executive Order directs agencies to consider how best to promote retrospective analyses of existing rules. Specifically, agencies were required to develop a plan under which the agency will periodically review existing regulations to determine which should be maintained, modified, strengthened, or repealed to increase the effectiveness and decrease the burdens

of the agency's regulatory program. DOE's plan can be accessed at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/21stcenturygov/actions/21st-century-regulatory-system>.

The Department is committed to maintaining a consistent culture of retrospective review and analysis. DOE will continually engage in review of its rules to determine whether there are burdens on the public that can be avoided by amending or rescinding existing requirements. To that end, DOE is publishing today's RFI to again explicitly solicit public input. In addition, DOE is always open to receiving information about the impact of its regulations. To facilitate both this RFI and the ongoing submission of comments, DOE has created a link on the Web page of DOE's Office of the General Counsel to an email in-box at Regulatory.Review@hq.doe.gov, which interested parties can use to identify to DOE regulations that may be in need of review.

While the Department promulgates rules in accordance with the law and to the best of its analytic capability, it is difficult to be certain of the consequences of a rule, including its costs and benefits, until it has been tested. Because knowledge about the full effects of a rule is widely dispersed in society, members of the public are likely to have useful information and perspectives on the benefits and burdens of existing requirements and how regulatory obligations may be updated, streamlined, revised, or repealed to better achieve regulatory objectives, while minimizing regulatory burdens. Interested parties may also be well-positioned to identify those rules that are most in need of review and, thus, assist the Department in prioritizing and properly tailoring its retrospective review process. In short, engaging the public in an open, transparent process is a crucial step in DOE's review of its existing regulations.

List of Questions for Commenters

The following list of questions is intended to assist in the formulation of comments and not to restrict the issues that may be addressed. In addressing these questions or others, DOE requests that commenters identify with specificity the regulation or reporting requirement at issue, providing legal citation where available. The Department also requests that the

submitter provide, in as much detail as possible, an explanation why a regulation or reporting requirement should be modified, streamlined, expanded, or repealed, as well as specific suggestions of ways the Department can better achieve its regulatory objectives.

(1) How can the Department best promote meaningful periodic reviews of its existing rules and how can it best identify those rules that might be modified, streamlined, expanded, or repealed?

(2) What factors should the agency consider in selecting and prioritizing rules and reporting requirements for review?

(3) Are there regulations that are or have become unnecessary, ineffective, or ill advised and, if so, what are they? Are there rules that can simply be repealed without impairing the Department's regulatory programs and, if so, what are they?

(4) Are there rules or reporting requirements that have become outdated and, if so, how can they be modernized to accomplish their regulatory objectives better?

(5) Are there rules that are still necessary, but have not operated as well as expected such that a modified, stronger, or slightly different approach is justified?

(6) Does the Department currently collect information that it does not need or use effectively to achieve regulatory objectives?

(7) Are there regulations, reporting requirements, or regulatory processes that are unnecessarily complicated or could be streamlined to achieve regulatory objectives in more efficient ways?

(8) Are there rules or reporting requirements that have been overtaken by technological developments? Can new technologies be leveraged to modify, streamline, or do away with existing regulatory or reporting requirements?

(9) How can the Department best obtain and consider accurate, objective information and data about the costs, burdens, and benefits of existing regulations? Are there existing sources of data the Department can use to evaluate the post-promulgation effects of regulations over time? We invite interested parties to provide data that may be in their possession that documents the costs, burdens, and benefits of existing requirements.

(10) Are there regulations that are working well that can be expanded or used as a model to fill gaps in other DOE regulatory programs?

The Department notes that this RFI is issued solely for information and program-planning purposes. Responses to this RFI do not bind DOE to any further actions related to the response. All submissions will be made publically available on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Issued in Washington, DC, on May 4, 2012.

Gregory H. Woods,

General Counsel.

[FR Doc. 2012-11450 Filed 5-14-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

10 CFR Parts 429 and 430

[Docket No. EERE-2012-BT-TP-0017]

Test Procedure Guidance for Room Air Conditioners, Residential Dishwashers, and Residential Clothes Washers: Public Meeting

AGENCY: Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is holding a public meeting to provide a forum for manufacturers and test laboratories to discuss their respective interpretations of existing DOE test procedures, where they believe that the test procedures lack clarity, and to provide information for DOE to consider prior to publishing any proposed guidance to clarify the current test procedures for room air conditioners, residential dishwashers, and residential clothes washers.

DATES: DOE will hold a public meeting on June 1, 2012, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in Washington, DC.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held at the U.S. Department of Energy, Forrestal Building, Room 8E-089, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585-0121. To attend, please notify Ms. Brenda Edwards at (202) 586-2945. Please note that foreign nationals visiting DOE Headquarters are subject to advance security screening procedures. Any foreign national wishing to participate in the public meeting should advise DOE as soon as possible by contacting Ms. Brenda Edwards at (202) 586-2945 to initiate the necessary procedures.

Additionally, DOE plans to conduct the public meeting via webinar. To participate via webinar, participants must sign up by following the instructions at <https://www1.goto.com/register/350255376>. Participants are responsible for ensuring

that their systems are compatible with the webinar software.

Docket: The docket is available for review at www.regulations.gov. All documents in the docket are listed in the www.regulations.gov index. However, not all documents in the index may be publicly available, such as information that is exempt from public disclosure. A link to the docket web page can be found at www.regulations.gov. The www.regulations.gov web page contains a link to the docket for this notice, along with simple instructions on how to access all documents, including public comments, in the docket.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ashley Armstrong, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Building Technologies, EE-2J, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585-0121. Phone: (202) 586-6590. Email:

Ashley.Armstrong@ee.doe.gov or Abigail Chingos, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of General Counsel, GC-32, 1000 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20585-0121. Phone: (202) 586-5060. Email: Abigail.Chingos@hq.doe.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Title III, Part B of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (EPCA or the Act), Public Law 94-163 (42 U.S.C. 6291 - 6309, as codified), established the Energy Conservation Program for Consumer Products Other Than Automobiles, a program covering most major household appliances, including the residential room air conditioners, residential dishwashers, and residential clothes washers that are the focus of this notice.¹ (42 U.S.C. 6292(2), (6) and (8))

Under EPCA, the program consists of four activities: (1) Testing; (2) labeling; (3) Federal energy conservation standards, and (4) certification, compliance, and enforcement. The testing requirements consist of test procedures that manufacturers of covered products must use as the basis for certifying to DOE that their products comply with applicable energy conservation standards adopted pursuant to EPCA and for representing the efficiency of those products. (42 U.S.C. 6293(c); 42 U.S.C. 6295(s)) Similarly, DOE must use these test procedures in any enforcement action to determine whether covered products comply with these energy conservation standards. (42 U.S.C. 6295(s))

DOE's existing test procedures for residential room air conditioners, residential dishwashers, and residential

¹ For editorial reasons, upon codification in the U.S. Code, Part B was re-designated Part A.