

**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY****Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy****Finding of No Significant Impact; Energy Conservation Program for Consumer Products**

**AGENCY:** Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, DOE.

**ACTION:** Finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for amended energy conservation standards for refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers.

**SUMMARY:** The Energy Policy and Conservation Act, as amended by the National Energy Conservation Policy Act and the National Appliance Energy Conservation Act, and the National Appliance Energy Conservation Amendments, prescribes energy conservation standards for certain major household appliances, and requires the Department of Energy (DOE) to administer an energy conservation program for these products. Based on an Environmental Assessment (EA), DOE/EA-1138, DOE has determined that the adoption of the amended energy efficiency Standard Level 1 for refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers, as modified for the Final Rule, would not be a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required, and the Department is issuing this finding of no significant impact (FONSI).

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the EA and modified emission reduction tables for the Final Rule are available from: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Forrestal Building, Mail Station EE-43, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586-9127.

**FOR FURTHER PROGRAM INFORMATION**

**CONTACT:** Dr. Barry P. Berlin, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable

Energy (EE-43), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585-0121, (202) 586-9127.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE DOE NEPA PROCESS, CONTACT:** Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585-0119, (202) 586-4600.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:**

The action is the establishment of revised energy conservation standards for refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers.

**Environmental Impacts**

The EA evaluates the environmental impacts of a range of new energy conservation standards for refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers. The results are presented for each potential standard level. Each potential standard level is an alternative action, and the environmental impacts of each alternative are compared to what would be expected to happen if no new standard were adopted, i.e., the "no action" alternative. The amended standard being finalized today is a small modification of one of the standard levels that had been proposed.

The main environmental concern is emissions from fossil-fueled electricity generation. Most of the design options for this appliance product category would result in decreased electricity use and, therefore, a reduction in power plant emissions. The proposed efficiency standards would generally decrease air pollution by decreasing future energy demand. The greatest decreases in air pollution would be for sulfur oxides, listed in equivalent weight of sulfur dioxide, or SO<sub>2</sub>. Reductions of nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide would also occur, and are listed by weight of NO<sub>x</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub>, respectively.

Although the quantity of raw materials used per appliance would remain relatively constant, in most

scenarios initial price increases from standards are expected to reduce slightly the number of appliances sold, which would result in small decreases in the total amount of raw materials used. The main effect of this decreased appliance production would be the SO<sub>2</sub> decreases from avoided fuel burning at power plants. The environmental contribution from reduced steel production is not included in the estimates for net SO<sub>2</sub> decreases resulting from design changes in these products.

Although the effects on particulate emissions related to the standard-induced decrease in electricity generation would be minor compared to effects on SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and CO<sub>2</sub>, any reduction would possibly be beneficial to the quality of surface water. Since the total amount of particulate emitted would decrease, it is very likely that less particulate would reach surface water.

Reduction in particulate emissions accompanied by decreases in SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> would have other beneficial effects on the environment. The resultant improvement in air quality and the decreased potential for acid rain formation could help improve the quality of wetlands and fish and wildlife as well as aid in the preservation of historical and archaeological sites.

**Determination**

Based upon the EA, DOE has determined that the adoption of the amended energy-efficiency standards for refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, an EIS is not required.

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