

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460



OFFICE OF  
AIR AND RADIATION

October 20, 2003

Dear ENERGY STAR<sup>®</sup> Partner and Other Interested Parties:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) intention to temporarily suspend the Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) requirement in the ENERGY STAR<sup>®</sup> residential central air-conditioner (CAC) and heat pump (HP) specification. EPA is proposing that this change will take effect on November 30, 2003. Comments on this proposed change are welcomed and will be considered before making a final decision.

While EPA intends to suspend the EER requirement temporarily, EPA still believes, as it did in 2002 when EER was included in the final specification, that EER is an important part of addressing the overall equipment performance of central air conditioners and heat pumps for many consumers. It is important for consumers to know that their equipment will operate efficiently across a range of likely conditions, and there is ample evidence that energy performance declines at higher temperatures.

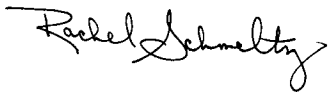
EPA is considering suspending the EER requirement due to a lack of information as to which products meet this requirement. As you may be aware, since the current specification (Version 3.0) went into effect in October 2002, EPA has relied on the national database maintained by the Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute (ARI) to help consumers, contractors, and others identify qualifying CAC and HP equipment. Such a database is critical in identifying which, among thousands of possible split system equipment combinations, meet the ENERGY STAR EER requirements. Shortly after the October 2002 specification change, EER values were no longer available from the ARI database, and no alternative source of this information currently exists at the national level. While ARI is exploring alternative ways in which to identify ENERGY STAR qualified products in their database, there is currently no way for consumers, contractors, and others to identify products that qualify under the current specification.

EPA is consulting with ARI and working closely with other key organizations to restore a national source of information on CAC and HP products that meet the ENERGY STAR EER requirements as quickly as possible. We are hopeful that these information issues can be resolved by spring 2004. When it is clear that they can be resolved, EPA will move to reinstate the EER requirement for CACs and HPs .

If EPA does proceed with a temporary suspension of the EER requirement, EPA will continue to highlight the importance of EER in educational and marketing materials as well as on the [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) Web site. EPA also recognizes that many ENERGY STAR utility partners will continue to promote EER through rebates and other measures. These partners are still encouraged to use ENERGY STAR as a basic promotional platform with some additional requirements added.

To the extent you would like to provide feedback on our intent to temporarily suspend the EER requirement in the ENERGY STAR specification for CAC and HPs, please send your comments to me at (202) 343-9124 or [schmeltz.rachel@epa.gov](mailto:schmeltz.rachel@epa.gov). We expect to make a final decision on this issue by November 17, 2003. We recognize that the comment period is not as long as is typical during a specification revision process. However, we do not expect the short comment period to have an adverse impact on industry and is probably beneficial for industry representatives in preparing sales and marketing plans for next season.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Schmeltz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Rachel Schmeltz, Product Manager  
ENERGY STAR for Heating and Cooling Equipment