DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Conservation and Renewable Energy

[Docket Number CE-RM-88-101]

Energy Conservation Program for Consumer Products

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Candidate Energy Conservation Standards for Dishwashers, Clothes Washers and Clothes Dryers.

SUMMARY: The Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA), as amended by the National Energy Conservation Policy Act (NECPA) and the National Appliance Energy Conservation Act (NAECA), 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. As a general matter, these federal standards preempt State and local standards and any other State and local requirements with respect to energy efficiency or energy use of these products. Among other things, NAECA requires DOE to consider amending the energy conservation standards for dishwashers, clothes washers and clothes dryers.

Based on an Environmental Assessment (EA), (DOE/EA-0386), DOE has determined that the proposal of any of the candidate amended energy efficiency standards for dishwashers, clothes washers and clothes dryers 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 is not required.

Public Availability: The EA is published within the Technical Support Document for the range of candidate amended energy efficiency standards and is available on request at the following address: Hearings and Dockets Branch, Office of Conservation and Renewable Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, Docket Number CE-RM-88-101, 1000 Independence Avenue. SW., Room 6B-025. CE-43.1 Washington, DC 20585 (202) 586-9320.

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: DOE prepared an Environmental Assessment (DOE/EA-0386) on the candidate standards for amended energy-efficiency standards pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, Pub. L. 91-190, 40 U.S.C. 4221 et seq., and the implementing regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality [40 CFR Parts 1500-1508]. The EA addresses the possible incremental environmental effects attributable to the application of a range of candidate amended standards (in the form of engineering changes) to the design of dishwashers, clothes washers, and clothes dryers. The effects of the candidate amended standards range from no change to a slight improvement in the environment as discussed in the General Findings below.

Approach Used in the Analysis

The EA evaluates the environmental impacts resulting from the proposed setting of a range of amended energy-efficiency standards for dishwashers, clothes washers, and clothes dryers in accordance with the NAECA. A complete description of the Engineering and Economic Analysis of the range of amended standards may be found in the Technical Support Document (TSD).

The main environmental concern addressed is emissions from fossil fueled electricity generation. Each of the design options for dishwashers, clothes washers and clothes dryers would result in decreased electricity use and, therefore, reduced powerplant emissions. The proposed efficiency standards would decrease air pollution by decreasing future energy demand. The greatest decreases in air pollution would be in sulfur oxides.

Some design options for dishwashers would also reduce water consumption, resulting in lower in-house emissions from fuel-burning water heaters.

An in-depth analysis of particulate emissions is not included in the EA because particulate emissions are minor compared to sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions. For example, in 1984 power plants contributed only 7 percent of U.S. total particulate emissions as compared to contributions of 83 percent and 34 percent of total SO_2 and NO_2 emissions, respectively (EPA, 1986)

General Findings

1. Dishwashers

The greatest environmental impacts of the candidate standards would result from generating less electricity. Power plants' main environmental effects on air and water result from emissions of sulfur oxides (SO_x), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and carbon dioxide (CO_2). All SO_x and NO_x emissions are expressed in the equivalent weights of SO_2 and NO_2, respectively. Carbon dioxide emissions are commonly expressed as tons of carbon. General findings are summarized below.

A. Sulfur Dioxide

The greatest decrease in air pollution would occur for sulfur dioxide. The range of expected reductions from the candidate standards is from 4,442 tons, or 0.03 percent of the U.S. SO_2 emissions expected to be emitted by power plants in the year 2010, to a level of 9,523 tons, or 0.06 percent of the expected U.S. power plant emissions of SO_2 in 2010.

B. Nitrogen Dioxide

The expected reductions in NO_2 from the candidate standard levels range from 3,299 tons, or 0.03 percent of the total NO_2 emissions expected to be emitted by power plants in the year 2010, to a level of 6,869 tons, or 0.07 percent of the expected U.S. power plant emissions of NO_2 in 2010.

C. Carbon Dioxide

The expected reductions in CO_2 from the candidate standard levels range from the equivalent of 350,000 tons, or 0.02 percent of the total CO_2 emissions expected to be emitted in the U.S. in the year 2010, to a level of 704,000 tons, or 0.04 percent of expected U.S. emissions of CO_2 in 2010.

The candidate dishwasher standards would also save 197 billion to 276 billion gallons of water during the 1993-2015 time period.

None of the environmental impacts from the savings of SO_2, NO_2, or CO_2 from the candidate standards is considered to be significant.

2. Clothes Washers

The greatest environmental impact of the candidate standards for clothes washers would be a decrease in electricity consumption. General findings are summarized below:

A. Sulfur Dioxide

The expected reductions in SO_2 from the candidate standard levels range

from 8,943 tons, or 0.05 percent of the expected U.S. power plant emissions of SO_2 in 2010, to a level of 21,528 tons or 0.13 percent of the U.S. SO_2 emissions expected to be emitted by power plants in the year 2010.

B. Nitrogen Dioxide

The expected reductions in NO_2 from the candidate standard levels range from 6,759 tons, or .07 percent of the U.S. NO_2 emissions expected to be emitted by power plants in the year 2010, to a level of 15,875 tons, or 0.16 percent of 2010 emissions of NO_2 from U.S. power plants.

C. Carbon Dioxide

The expected reductions in CO_2 from the candidate standard levels range from 736,000 tons, or 0.04 percent of the expected CO_2 emissions in the U.S. in 2010, to a level of 1,677,000 tons, or C.09 percent of the CO_2 emissions expected in the U.S. in the year 2010.

The environmental impacts from the savings of SO_2, NO_2, or CO_2 from the candidate standards are considered to be insignificant.

3. Clothes Dryers

The greatest impact of the candidate standard levels for clothes dryers is a decrease in electricity consumption. General findings are summarized below:

A. Sulfur Dioxide

The expected reductions in SO_2 from the candidate standard levels range from 10,552 tons, or 0.06 percent of the SO_2 emissions expected from U.S. power plants in the year 2010, to a level of 38,230 tons, which would represent 0.22 percent of SO_2 emissions by U.S. power plants in 2010.

B. Nitrogen Dioxide

The expected reductions in NO_2 from the candidate standard levels range from 7,020 tons, or 0.07 percent of the U.S. NO_2 emissions expected to be emitted by U.S. power plants in the year 2010, to a level of 25,641 tons, representing 0.25 percent of NO_2 emissions by U.S. power plants in 2010.

C. Carbon Dioxide

The expected reductions in CO_2 from the candidate standard levels range from 638,000 tons, or 0.04 tons of the CO_2 emissions expected to be emitted in the U.S. in the year 2010, to a level of 2,398,000 tons, or 0.13 percent of U.S. emissions of CO_2 in 2010.

The environmental impacts from the savings of SO_2, NO_2, or CO_2 from the candidate standards are considered to be insignificant.

In conclusion, no levels of the candidate standards for the appliances, individually or cumulatively, would result in significant reductions of SO_2, NO_2, or CO_2 and therefore none would result in significant environmental impacts.

Determination

Based upon the EA, DOE has determined that the proposal of any of the candidate amended energy-efficiency standards for dishwashers, clothes dryers and clothes washers would not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Issued in Washington, DC, May 30, 1989.

Peter N. Brush,

Acting Assistant Secretary, Environment, Safety and Health.

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