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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Finding of No Significant Impact

Energy Conservation Program for Consumer Products

AGENCY: Department of Energy

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for Candidate Energy Conservation Standards for Eight Appliances

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-0819, DOE has determined that the proposal of any of the candidate amended energy efficiency standards for the eight appliances 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).

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY: Copies of the EA are available from the Hearings and Dockets Branch, Office of Conservation and Renewable Energy, CE-43, Room 6B-025, U.S. Department of Energy, Docket Number CE-RM-90-201, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., 20585, (202) 586-9320.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action is the establishment of revised energy conservation standards for room air conditioners, water heaters, direct heating equipment, mobile home furnaces, kitchen ranges and ovens, pool heaters and fluorescent lamp ballasts, and to consider standards for televisions.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The EA evaluates the environmental impacts of a range of new candidate energy conservation standards for eight types of household appliances. The results are

presented for each potential standard level for each of the eight appliance types. 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 standards for each product were finalized, i.e., the "no action" alternative.

The main environmental concern is emissions from fossil-fueled electricity generation. Most of the design options for the eight appliances would result in decreased electricity use and, therefore, a reduction of 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_2. Reductions of nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide would also occur and are listed by weight of NO_x and CO_2, respectively. Design options for many of the appliances (i.e., gas and oil water heaters, gas pool heaters, direct heating equipment, mobile home furnaces, and gas ranges and ovens) would also reduce in-home fuel consumption, resulting in lower in-home emissions from fuel-burning appliances.

Although the quantity of raw materials used per appliance would remain relatively constant, in most scenarios increased initial prices 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_2 decreases from avoided fuel burning at power plants. The environmental contribution from reduced steel production is not included in the estimates for net SO_2 decreases resulting from design changes in these products.

Although the effects on particulate emissions related to a standard-induced decrease in electricity generation would be minor compared to effects on SO_2, NO_2, and CO_2, any reduction would possibly be beneficial to the quality of surface water. Since the total amount of particulates emitted would decrease, it is very likely that fewer particulates would reach the surface water.

Reductions in particulate emissions accompanied by decreases in SO_2 and NO_2 would have other beneficial effects on the environment. The resultant improvement to 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.

Reduced in-home fuel consumption of gas or oil would decrease the impact of combustion on indoor air quality. Indoor air problems are usually due to a combination of factors, including a tight house envelope, insufficient ventilation for cooking appliances,

presence of sources such as cigarette smokers or formaldehyde-containing products, and radon diffusion from soil. In comparison to the above factors, and because fuel-burning appliances are normally vented to the outside, the projected changes in home fuel-burning appliance use is expected to have little effect on indoor air quality.

DETERMINATION: Based upon the EA, DOE has determined that the proposal of any of the candidate amended energy-efficiency standards for room air conditioners, water heaters, direct heating equipment, mobile home furnaces, kitchen ranges and ovens, pool heaters, fluorescent lamp ballasts, and television sets would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, an EIS for the proposed action is not required.

Issued in Washington, D.C., this 4th day, of Dec. 1992.

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