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09-AAER-2

DATE	MAR 15 2011
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California Energy Commission
Dockets Office, MS-4
Re: Docket No. 09-AAER-2
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

RE: 2011 Rulemaking Proceedings Phase II on Appliance Efficiency Regulations (Docket No. 09-AAER-2)

This letter constitutes the comments of the Appliance Standards Awareness Project (ASAP) in response to the California Energy Commission (CEC) request for comments on appliance efficiency standards for battery chargers. ASAP is a coalition group dedicated to advancing cost-effective energy efficiency standards for appliances and equipment. ASAP works at both the state and federal levels and is led by a Steering Committee with representatives from consumer groups, utilities, state government, environmental groups, and energy-efficiency groups. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into this important process, and we strongly support the CEC moving forward with this rulemaking as energy efficiency standards for battery chargers have the potential to provide significant benefits to California and the nation.

Industry groups have argued that a CEC rulemaking for consumer battery chargers is unnecessary given that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is concurrently conducting a rulemaking for consumer battery chargers. Below we outline the significance of this rulemaking and the potential benefits in the context of the DOE rulemaking.

The scope of coverage of the CEC rulemaking is broader than the scope of the DOE rulemaking. The scope of coverage proposed in the staff report includes battery chargers for both consumer and non-consumer products while DOE only has the authority to cover battery chargers for consumer products. Based on the analysis in the staff report, the proposed standards for non-consumer battery chargers will yield energy savings of 409 GWh/year after stock turnover, or enough electricity to power about 58,000 California homes.¹ Non-consumer battery chargers include chargers for lift trucks, handheld barcode scanners, and two-way radios.

California has the opportunity to accrue savings from standards for battery chargers for consumer products before the DOE standards take effect. California has established aggressive goals for reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The 2008 update to the Energy Action Plan notes that meeting the AB 32 goals will require

¹ Based on average California residential consumption of 587 kWh/month: U.S. EIA. 2010. *Table 5. Average Monthly Bill By Census Division, and State 2008*. <http://www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/electricity/esr/table5.html>.

“unprecedented levels of energy efficiency investment” and that next steps in the action area of energy efficiency include “additional, more stringent, codes and standards for appliances and buildings and the associated technology and design research and development to support them.”² The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the CEC also aim to achieve zero-net-energy homes by 2020 and zero-net-energy commercial buildings by 2030.

Plug loads represent a growing portion of residential and commercial energy use. Therefore, strategies to reduce energy use from plug loads, including battery chargers, will become increasingly important for meeting the zero-net-energy goals and the statewide goals for reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Based on the proposed effective date in the staff report, California would accrue at least one year of savings before the effective date of the DOE standards. The analysis in the staff report shows that the energy savings from just the first year sales for consumer battery chargers would reduce electricity consumption by 321 GWh. The savings from the first-year sales of consumer battery chargers will continue to accrue for the life of the products, which is as long as 10 years for products such as golf carts and portable lighting.

It is also important to consider that while DOE is required by statute to publish a final rule for standards for battery chargers by July 1, 2011, DOE has yet to publish a proposed rule. DOE has recently missed its statutory deadline of December 31, 2010 for publishing amended refrigerator/freezer standards—as of March 15, 2011 a final rule had yet to be published—and other rules for which DOE has either a statutory or a consent decree deadline seem to be falling behind. We encourage the CEC to proceed with this rulemaking for both consumer and non-consumer battery chargers as the timeline and outcome of the DOE rulemaking are still uncertain.

A strong California standard for battery chargers could potentially result in a stronger national standard than what might otherwise be achieved. Historically, DOE has often followed California’s lead in establishing appliance efficiency standards. As noted in the staff report, the proposed metrics for California standards would ensure energy savings regardless of how a particular product is operated in the field by requiring a minimum performance level for all three battery-operating modes—charge, maintenance, and no-battery. Duty cycles vary significantly among products and among users of a given product. For example, the duty cycle assumptions in the staff report show that a cordless phone on average spends significantly more time in charge mode and significantly less time unplugged than a cell phone. While some cell phone users may always unplug the charger just after the battery is fully charged, others may leave the phone charging overnight meaning that the charger spends significant amounts of time in maintenance mode. Separate standards for charge, maintenance, and no-battery modes as proposed in the staff report would ensure that energy savings from more efficient battery chargers are realized in the field regardless of how an individual consumer or business uses any given product.

In contrast to the proposed efficiency metrics in the staff report, in the preliminary analysis released by DOE in September 2010, DOE used an annual energy use metric to evaluate

² 2008 Update: Energy Action Plan. <http://www.energy.ca.gov/2008publications/CEC-100-2008-001/CEC-100-2008-001.PDF>.

candidate standard levels (CSLs).³ Assumptions about duty cycles are clearly necessary for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the proposed standards and potential savings, and the analysis in the staff report has applied duty cycles in these calculations. However, a standard based on annual energy use where the metric itself incorporates duty cycles is not appropriate for a product like battery chargers given the tremendous variation in duty cycles as described above. DOE could follow the proposed CEC approach and establish efficiency metrics that would at least more closely resemble the metrics proposed in the staff report to better ensure energy savings in the field. We, along with other stakeholders, recommended this approach to DOE in written comments submitted in response to the preliminary analysis.⁴

We would hope that if California sets standards for battery chargers that achieve significant cost-effective energy savings using readily-available technology, DOE would establish standards that are no less stringent. Therefore, California standards would not only achieve long-term energy savings for the State from non-consumer battery chargers, but could also yield additional long-term energy savings for both California and the nation beyond what otherwise might be achieved due to the potential for California standards to positively influence the outcome of the DOE rulemaking. In addition, California standards for consumer battery chargers would likely spur efficiency improvements in the market that could have long-term energy-saving benefits regardless of the ultimate DOE standards.

Thank you very much for considering these comments. We look forward to continuing to participate in this rulemaking process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Joanna Mauer". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Joanna Mauer
Technical Advocacy Coordinator
Appliance Standards Awareness Project

³ U.S. Department of Energy. 2010. Preliminary Technical Support Document: Energy Efficiency Program for Consumer Products and Commercial and Industrial Equipment: Battery Chargers and External Power Supplies. http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/appliance_standards/residential/pdfs/bceps_prealanalysis_tsd.pdf.

⁴ Comment ID: EERE-2008-BT-STD-0005-0047.1.
<http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;dct=FR+PR+N+O+SR+PS;rpp=10;po=70;D=EERE-2008-BT-STD-0005>.