

Re: 16 CFR Part 305 Appliance Labeling Rule

Dear FTC:

I would like to comment on two aspects of the proposed changes to the Energy Guide label.

(1) To fulfill the second of the label's two purposes enumerated in the just published Appliance Labeling Rule, to "aid consumers who are seeking to buy high-efficiency products that reduce energy use," it seems appropriate that the Energy Guide label provide consumers information that can help them identify the specific appliance model that appears on the left end of the label's scale. Presently the kWh/yr figure (and proposed \$/yr-figure) corresponding to the "most efficient" end of the scale is merely suggestive—the number by itself does not enable consumers to find or compare, much less purchase, this otherwise comparable model. Knowing the difference between the labeled model and the most efficient comparable model does not in the present system supply the conditions necessary for consumers to act on the exhortation: "Compare the Energy Use of this _____ with Others Before You Buy." For someone in a shopping context to compare these two refrigerators, for instance, it is surely helpful for them to be able to find out some basic information about the model against which it is being compared. Comparing under the terms of the present label is limited by what happens to be on the appliance dealer's floor. It is extremely unlikely that the most efficient example within each of the 60-odd ranges of comparability for refrigerators will be viewable on the showroom floor. Consequently asking sales staff to help identify the model "all the way on the left" is unlikely to lead to the comparison experience suggested here. Although the FTC's online directory of available appliances is much appreciated and in principle could supply the information necessary for this comparison, it is not presently available at the point of purchase, nor can the electronic list be expected to aid consumers in the way that a modified label could. What would benefit consumers interested in pursuing the most energy efficient model within a given range of comparability is model specific information of the most efficient model **ON THE LABEL**. In other words, a redesigned label should supplement the kWh-figure on the far left, or in the case of the proposed new label--the \$-figure, with the corresponding brand and model number of the most efficient comparable appliance.

In lieu of this, an alternate means should be provided that would permit consumers to identify this model from within the appliance showroom.

(2) Secondly I am curious to learn what happened to the phrase, quoted above, "Compare the Energy Use of this _____ with Others Before You Buy"? It has vanished from the proposed label, even though it constituted the central exhortation in the prior design. If a reason was given for eliminating it I missed it. My suggestion would be to put it back. Alternately, the exhortation could read: "Ask How to Find the _____ at the Left End of the Scale Before You Buy." Since the FTC interprets its labeling mandate to include "aiding consumers who are seeking to buy high-efficiency products that reduce energy use," it seems reasonable that the label would reflect or even encourage this sentiment.

Though the current label may do a fair job of directing consumers' attention to the presence of more efficient (comparable) models, the identity of such appliances remains unknown, and for all intents and purposes unknowable to the majority of consumers studied and discussed in the

various label-design inspired research efforts. I am intrigued that this issue has not come up in discussions or in research related to Energy label design, and therefore feel compelled to bring it to your attention at this admittedly late stage in the process.

I thank you for enabling unaffiliated individuals to participate in these proceedings and look forward to your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Reuben Deumling