

# Press Release

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## **New Environmental Performance Standard for Power Sets Stage for Harmonizing “Green” Energy Initiatives in U.S.**

Tucson, Arizona -- January 23, 2006 — Electric power industry representatives, government officials and other energy experts attending the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Electric Utilities Environmental Conference had an opportunity to preview a new national standard that will establish the first unified framework for assessing the environmental performance of electric power generation. Under the standard, power systems can be rated based on their environmental performance, a feature that will facilitate evaluation and decision-making. The standard is expected to be used to resolve differences between renewable purchasing policies, to assess energy sector climate initiatives, and to establish regional environmental performance baselines against which improvements can be measured.

The ASTM “Standard Practice for Comparing the Environmental Performance of the Electric Power Generation Facilities and Infrastructure (ASTM E06.71.10)” is due to be published for ballot in March. The draft standard was available for review at Booth #102, where ASTM Task Group members were on hand to explain its applications and implications, and to solicit input from conferees before the standard goes to final ballot. Additionally, ASTM Task Group member Stan Rhodes, president of Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), is scheduled to provide a briefing on the standard during a presentation to take place during Track D7, Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am.

“One important application of the standard will be its use in harmonizing renewable and alternative energy portfolio purchasing requirements instituted by local and state governments,” said Bill Karsell, the ASTM E06.71.10 Task Group leader and long-time energy policy expert with the US Department of the Interior. “At present, these policies are in conflict with one another, and are not necessarily leading to the desired reductions in environmental impacts at the regional power pool level. This tool will help the various government agencies ensure that their efforts are resulting in significant improvements for the region.” Task Group members plan to educate policymakers and industry representatives about the standard and its applications, starting in the 11-state Western Electric Coordinating Council (WECC) region where a majority of the country’s current renewable assets are located, he added.

The technical underpinning of the standard is an internationally recognized environmental accounting technique known as Life-Cycle Assessment (LCA). LCA is a systems-oriented analysis, addressing all environmental and human health impacts associated with power systems from cradle-to-grave — that is, from the time energy resources are extracted and processed through electricity generation, transmission and distribution to end users.

According to Dr. Rhodes, an LCA practitioner who has conducted numerous studies of energy systems, “LCA serves as an objective, transparent tool for resolving many of the complex issues affecting environmental decision-making in the electricity sector. Moreover, this

standard will require LCA practitioners to achieve a uniform high level of practice to ensure meaningful and comparable results.”

Early support for the standard has emerged from representatives of the power industry, government agencies, and energy customers. For instance, Clayton Palmer, manager of environmental and resource planning for the Colorado River Storage Project Management Center of Western Area Power Administration, sees the standard as providing an objective basis for evaluating hydropower’s place in renewable portfolios. “Western oversees major hydropower generation in the western US,” said Palmer. “We view Environmental Performance Ratings as an effective tool for gauging the degree to which our efforts are effectively addressing environmental issues, and for ensuring that the environmental footprint of these hydropower operations is assessed on a level playing field as compared to other renewable energy generation assets in the region.”

In a public statement to the California Energy Commission last October. Justin Bradley, director of energy programs with the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, expressed his group’s interest in applying the standard to addressing pressing energy issues. “We recommend that due consideration be given to ‘clean coal’ technologies . . . including the adoption of action items intended to enable its development as a source of electricity to California. The draft ASTM E06.71.10 standard . . . can be used to assess the benefits of this technology,” said Bradley. “Using that methodology, ‘clean coal’s’ environmental benefits (when replacement of older coal plants and resources conservation issues are taken into account) may be considerable.”

The standard has also garnered support from power producers across the border in Canada. According to Rick Patrick, vice president of planning, environment and regulatory affairs for Saskpower, “We support the establishment of North American environmental performance evaluation standards for power generation that are scientific, comprehensive, value-neutral, and transparent. Based on life-cycle pilot studies we have conducted, we believe that the approach taken in the proposed ASTM standard satisfies these objectives,” said Patrick. “We are now exploring the use of this approach to establish a province-wide environmental baseline for future supply planning purposes. We also applaud the efforts of others, such as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, who are applying the draft ASTM standard to evaluate energy options.”

The draft standard is currently available to ASTM members at [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or by contacting Task Group leader Bill Karsell at [flickerhouse@hotmail.com](mailto:flickerhouse@hotmail.com), or Sub-Task Group leader Stan Rhodes at [srhodes@scscertified.com](mailto:srhodes@scscertified.com).

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