

Proposed Specification on ‘Computers and Displays - Amended’

Background: In April of 2019, the existing ‘Desktop and Laptop Computers’ specification was amended to align it with new EPEAT standards that were released in 2019, and the resulting amended specification was released by the Interagency Subcommittee as a tentative specification.

Commenting Entities: The American Chemistry Council’s North American Flame Retardant Alliance.

Issues raised:

1. Halogenated Flame Retardants

Comments: Industry requests that the specification be amended to reduce the scope of the encouragement for bidders to provide an explanation of what they are doing to replace halogenated flame retardants with other chemistries in their products to only penta, octa and decaBDE. They also recommend removing the encouragement for bidders to offer products that meet flame retardant standards without using flame retardant chemicals.

Response: Halogenated flame retardants as a class pose numerous hazards and are a legitimate focus of green procurement. The language at issue was contained in the existing ‘Desktop and Laptop Computers’ specification approved by the Committee in 2008. No evidence has been submitted that the encouragement has provided a hardship to either purchasers or vendors. Moreover, the language merely encourages bidders responding to solicitations to provide information and offer products that meet flame retardancy standards without using added chemicals. It is an encouragement only.

Recommendation: Retain the encouragement without modification.