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Greater Environmental Gains & Energy Savings Anticipated By More Efficient Power Supplies For Small Electronics

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A proposal for efficiency specifications and a test procedure for single voltage external AC/DC power supplies, commonly known as external “power packs,” will be unveiled at an electronics conference in Anaheim, Calif., on Feb. 23. The work builds on EPA’s efforts through the ENERGY STAR program to capture additional environmental benefits and energy efficiency in both active and standby modes across a wide variety of consumer electronics and office equipment.

External power supplies convert AC power from a wall outlet into lower voltage DC power for use in cordless tools and telephones, cell phones, and many other consumer and office products. With more than a billion external power supplies shipped worldwide each year, this industry offers significant energy savings potential. In the U.S., the total amount of electricity that flows through external and internal power supplies is more than 207 billion kwh/year (worth about \$17 billion/year), or about six percent of the national electric bill. More efficient designs could save an estimated 15 to 20 percent of that energy.

EPA’s unified energy-efficiency test procedure, developed in consultation with several international partners, will ensure comparability of efficiency data, lower participation/compliance costs, and other positive benefits to industry participants and policy makers worldwide. Through international coordination, the ENERGY STAR program hopes to expand the market for highly energy-efficient power supplies, and strengthen the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

Through ENERGY STAR, EPA intends to create strong market incentives to enable the power supply industry to improve availability and the use of energy-efficient power supply options – thereby recognizing significant energy and environmental savings. The test procedure is the first step towards accomplishing that goal. In addition, EPA’s draft ENERGY STAR specification for single voltage external AC/DC power supplies will address both active and standby mode efficiency. The draft specification will be available for review and comment via the ENERGY STAR website at: <http://www.energystar.gov/powersupplies> .

The California Energy Commission and EPA will also jointly announce an international design competition for energy-efficient power supplies at the Anaheim conference, known as the Applied Power Electronics Conference and Exposition, which is held Feb. 22-26. **The competition, which will extend through 2004, has also been endorsed by the Power Sources Manufacturers Association, marking a unique collaborative effort by industry and government.**

EPA is closely coordinating its power supply efforts with China, a global exporter of power supplies. Additional partners include: National Appliance and Equipment Energy Efficiency Committee, Australia; Eletrobras/Procel, Brazil; Office of Energy Efficiency, Natural Resources Canada; China Certification Center for Energy Conservation Products; and the California Energy Commission.