

Executive Order 13693 & The HHS Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan (Part 1)

Overview

On March 19, 2015, Executive Order (EO) 13693, Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade, was signed by President Obama. This Executive Order dictates sustainability policy and goals for executive departments and agencies and further supersedes prior executive orders and memoranda regarding federal sustainability policies noted below:

- Executive Order 13423 of January 24, 2007;
- Executive Order 13514 of October 5, 2009;
- Presidential Memorandum of December 2, 2011 (Implementation of Energy Savings Projects and Performance-Based Contracting for Energy Savings);
- Section 1 of Presidential Memorandum of February 21, 2012 (Driving Innovation and Creating Jobs in Rural America through Biobased and Sustainable Product Procurement);
- Presidential Memorandum of December 5, 2013 (Federal Leadership on Energy Management);
- Presidential Memorandum of May 24, 2011 (Federal Fleet Performance)

The goal of EO 13693 is to maintain Federal leadership in sustainability and greenhouse gas emission reductions. In order to accomplish this goal, EO 13693 sets performance targets for key sustainability concerns. These sustainability targets focus on Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Creating Sustainable Buildings, Implementing Clean & Renewable Energy, Reducing Water Use, Improving Government Vehicle Efficiencies, Improving Sustainable Acquisitions, Reducing Pollution & Waste, Awarding Contracts Promoting Energy Efficient Performance, Promoting & Procuring Environmentally Sustainable Electronic Products, and Preparing for Effects of Climate Change.

In order to execute the directives of EO 13693, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has developed a Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan. The HHS Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan provides the specific means and methods which HHS will utilize to achieve the goals of the Executive Order.

HHS Implementation & Goals

Greenhouse Gas Reductions: EO 13693 divides greenhouse gas production into three separate categories commonly referred to as Scope 1, 2, and 3. The difference between these categories is dependent on whether the greenhouse gas is produced / directly controlled by a government agency or whether the production of the greenhouse gas is not owned or controlled by the agency but tangentially related, as through vendor supply chains. Relative to the fiscal year 2008 baseline, HHS has set a goal of 38.7% reduction in Scope 1 & 2 greenhouse gas and 25.4% reduction of Scope 3 greenhouse gas.

Sustainable Buildings: In order to meet building performance and energy conservation requirements, HHS plans to reduce building energy intensity

by 2.5% per year through 2025 relative to a 2015 baseline. This goal will be accomplished by evaluating meter data and optimizing areas where energy is expended. Additionally, HHS plans to implement green building specifications for all new construction projects and major renovations.

Renewable & Alternative Energy: As defined in EO 13693, clean energy encompasses both renewable electric energy sources and alternative energy sources. Some examples of renewable energy are solar, wind, and tidal power. Alternative energy is defined by the EO as energy generated from technologies that advance renewable heat sources, such as biomass or geothermal. By 2025 the HHS goal is to utilize 25-30% renewable and alternative energies for the agency's total energy consumption. In order to meet this benchmark HHS will employ strategies to generate power from local, cost effective sources. Examples of this may include installing on-site, photovoltaic (PV) arrays or geothermal heat pumps.

Water Use: Performance targets for managing water use are outlined in section 3(f) of EO 13693. By fiscal year 2025 the HHS goal is to reduce potable water consumption by 36% relative to a 2007 baseline. Additionally, industrial, landscaping, and agricultural water consumption will be reduced 2% annually through fiscal year 2025 relative to a 2010 baseline. Approaches to meet these objectives include the installation of water meters throughout HHS facilities and optimizing water use based on the data collected. Further, HHS intends to use high efficiency fixtures and equipment in new construction and renovations.

Conclusion

As stated in the first section of EO 13693, "Executive departments and agencies have been among our Nation's leaders as the United States works to build a clean energy economy". It is critical that federal agencies recognize their leadership role in spurring sustainable technologies and innovation, as well as providing an example to industry and other governments around the world. Executive Order 13693 promotes the ever pressing need for sustaining the health of both people and the environment for future generations. Part 2 of this series will cover EO 13693 goals relating to Vehicle Fleet Management, Sustainable Acquisitions, Pollution & Waste Reduction, Energy Performance Contracting, Electronics Stewardship, and Climate Change Resilience.

References

1. Executive Order 13693 of March 19, 2015, Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade, *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 3 (2015): 80 FR 15869, <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/03/25/2015-07016/planning-for-federal-sustainability-in-the-next-decade>.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "2015 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan", <http://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2015-sustainability-plan.pdf>.

