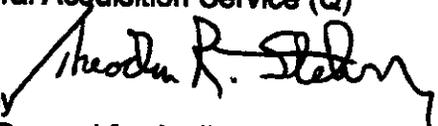




U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Office of Inspector General

DEC 22 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR: Steven J. Kempf,
Commissioner Federal Acquisition Service (Q)

FROM: Theodore R. Stehney 
Assistant Inspector General for Audits (JA)

SUBJECT: Eco-labels on GSA *Advantage!*®

The OIG has found a substantial disparity between the number of manufacturers and products identified by GSA *Advantage!*® as Green Seal certified and those that have actually been certified by Green Seal, as explained further below. Given the amount of inaccurate information, we believe this situation deserves your prompt attention.

As you know, GSA plays a pivotal role in assisting federal agencies with meeting their sustainable procurement goals. Eco-labeling on GSA *Advantage!*® supports this role by identifying environmentally preferable products and services. On October 29, 2010, the Office of Inspector General completed a limited analysis of eco-labels on GSA *Advantage!*®. Our specific objective was to determine if products displaying the Green Seal certification mark on GSA *Advantage!*® and that have been certified by Green Seal, an organization that evaluates and certifies products and services, meet specific environmental standards.

In brief, the Green Seal certification information on GSA *Advantage!*® is inaccurate and cannot be relied on by client agencies. We understand that GSA has a self-imposed deadline of March 31, 2011, to update the green product icons on GSA *Advantage!*®. However, federal agencies are currently relying on GSA to identify products to help them meet their sustainable procurement goals.

Our search found 217 manufacturers identified in GSA *Advantage!*® as having Green Seal certified products. However, only 35 of these manufacturers (16 percent) were identified by Green Seal as having any certified products. Further, numerous uncertified products produced by these 35 manufacturers are also listed in GSA *Advantage!*® as having the Green Seal certification. As federal agencies are relying on GSA to identify products or otherwise assist them to meet their sustainable procurement goals, it is essential that GSA conduct a



thorough examination of green product categories as expeditiously as possible. Until this examination is completed, GSA should remove or disable the Green Seal search criterion on GSA Advantage!®.

In addition to expediting a thorough review of eco-labels on GSA Advantage!®, GSA should improve controls by requiring contractors or manufacturers to submit the Green Seal official award letter and certification before the Green Seal certification mark is linked to their product or service on GSA Advantage!®.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sarah Breen at 202-219-1351 or sarah.breen@gsaig.gov.

**cc: Stephen R. Leeds, Senior Counselor to the Administrator (A)
Official file – JAO
Reading file – JA
JAS**

Concurrence: JA - Keegan _____ Date: _____