

Agreement Reached Under Wassenaar Arrangement to Raise Energy Density Limits on Secondary (Rechargeable) Cells

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Product Stewardship & Sustainability Report

During the 21st plenary meeting of the Wassenaar Arrangement, held in Vienna on December 2-3, 2015, participating States agreed to new export controls in a number of areas, including an increase in the energy density limits on secondary cells from 300 Wh/kg to 350 Wh/kg.

The Wassenaar Arrangement was established in 1996 and advocates implementation of effective export controls on strategic items with the objective of improving regional and international security and stability. It also promotes transparency in the international sales of “conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies.”

The energy density of secondary lithium ion cells has significantly increased over the past 10 years due to improvements in lithium ion technologies and demand for higher energy batteries to meet the demands of many consumer, medical, and industrial products. Lithium ion also has become the dominant rechargeable battery chemistry for consumer electronics and is poised to become commonplace for industrial, transportation, and power-storage applications.

Without a change in the Wh/kg limit, companies who wanted to export secondary cells that exceed 300 Wh/kg from the U.S.—or any other Participating State of the Wassenaar Arrangement—would have been required to secure the necessary licenses from the appropriate regulatory authorities. This change to 350 Wh/kg provides temporary relief for an industry that is seeking to optimize and market a number

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of cutting-edge, high-density secondary lithium ion and lithium metal cell technologies.

The new 2015 version of the control list under the Wassenaar Arrangement is now publicly available at <http://www.wassenaar.org/control-lists/>. The Bureau of Industry and Security with the U.S. Department of Commerce will publish a Final Rule in the first half of this year to revise its Commerce Control List and implement all of the changes made to the Wassenaar Arrangement's List of Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.