



Unsung Hero Awards 2017

February 8, 2017 - Washington, D.C.

Maria Tikoff Vargas

Director, Better Buildings Challenge and Senior Program Adviser,
U.S. Department of Energy

Maria T. Vargas is the Director of the Better Buildings Challenge at the Department of Energy. The goal of the Better Buildings Challenge is to make American buildings 20 percent more efficient in the next decade. Thru this leadership initiative, more than 300 chief executive officers, University presidents and state and local leaders have committed to upgrading buildings across their portfolio and are providing their energy savings data and innovative strategies as models for others to follow. Ms. Vargas also serves as a Senior Program Advisor in the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the Department of Energy.

Prior to her work at DOE, Ms. Vargas was the Brand Manager for the ENERGY STAR program for almost 20 years while at the US Environmental Protection Agency. Vargas also served as the Co-Director of the ENERGY STAR Buildings and Green Lights Partnership. She has been involved in policy work on the issues of ozone depletion, global climate change, and related environmental and energy issues since 1985.

Ms. Vargas received a Bachelor's degree from Swarthmore College (Swarthmore, PA) in Political Science and Economics and a Master's degree from the University of Oregon (Eugene, Oregon) in Public Affairs and Urban and Regional Planning.