

Appliance Standards Awareness Project
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy
Natural Resources Defense Council
Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

April 8, 2022

Ms. Julia Hegarty
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Building Technologies Office, EE-5B
1000 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20585

RE: Docket Number EERE-2021-BT-DET-0034: Notice of Proposed Determination of Miscellaneous Gas Products as a Covered Consumer Product

Dear Ms. Hegarty:

This letter constitutes the comments of the Appliance Standards Awareness Project (ASAP), the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) on the notice of proposed determination (NOPD) of miscellaneous gas products as a covered consumer product. 87 Fed. Reg. 6786 (February 7, 2022). We appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the Department.

We support DOE's determination that decorative hearths and outdoor heaters qualify as covered products under EPCA. DOE found that the average per-household energy use of decorative hearths and outdoor heaters (collectively, miscellaneous gas products) is 1,211 kWh/yr, which significantly exceeds the 100 kWh/yr average per-household energy use threshold for classification as a covered product under EPCA. Furthermore, miscellaneous gas products offer significant potential for energy savings. In the 2015 NOPR Technical Support Document ("2015 TSD") for standards for hearth products¹, DOE found that national full-fuel cycle energy savings of 0.69 quads² could be achieved by upgrading the baseline units with a standing pilot light to an electronic ignition system.

However, we encourage DOE to not finalize the proposed determination until finalizing any energy conservation standards since information that is learned during the rulemaking process for both test procedures and standards can ultimately inform the coverage determination.

We support DOE's determination to include propane products in the scope of this proposed coverage determination for miscellaneous gas products. The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) 2017 Hearth Study showed 59% of hearth products use natural gas and 17% use propane.³ We expect the ratio for the subset of decorative hearth products to be similar and believe propane decorative hearths may represent significant energy consumption. Upon a review of the market of outdoor heaters, it appears that propane-fueled heaters are a majority of the market. One large retailer's website lists 151 models of propane-fueled units and 23 models of natural gas-fueled outdoor heaters.⁴ Another large retailer's

¹ DOE estimates that miscellaneous gas products make up 42% of all hearth product shipments.

² See Table 10.7.1: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/EERE-2014-BT-STD-0036-0002>. p. 10-12.

³ <https://eta.lbl.gov/publications/survey-hearth-products-us-homes>. p. 30.

⁴

<https://www.lowes.com/pl/Gas-patio-heaters-Patio-heaters-accessories-Fire-pits-patio-heaters-Outdoors/4294610144>. Accessed on 3/29/2022.

website lists 352 models of propane-fueled units and 56 models of natural gas-fueled outdoor heaters.⁵ Therefore, it is critical that propane-fueled units be included in the miscellaneous gas products scope of coverage.

We believe that DOE may be underestimating the annual shipments of miscellaneous gas products.

Footnote 13 in the NOPD states that the estimate of annual shipments in the NOPD was developed by scaling the hearth product shipments in Table 9.3.1 of the 2015 TSD (analysis years 2005 through 2013) to the total gas appliance shipments from HPBA (analysis years 2016-2020). However, it is unclear what this scaling factor is intended to represent.⁶ The hearth product shipments reported by HPBA appear to be significantly higher than those estimated by DOE in Table 9.3.1 of the 2015 TSD.⁷ In addition, in the 2015 TSD, DOE excluded match-lit units from hearth product shipments.^{8,9} The NOPD analysis largely relied on the methodology from the 2015 TSD, so it is not clear if match-lit units were included in the national energy use calculation in this NOPD.¹⁰ Furthermore, shipments of miscellaneous gas products may have increased significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹ For these reasons, we believe that DOE may be underestimating the number of annual shipments (and stock) of miscellaneous gas products, which would result in an underestimate of the national energy use.

Thank you for considering these comments.

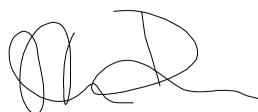
Sincerely,



Rachel Margolis
Technical Advocacy Associate
Appliance Standards Awareness Project



Amber Wood
Director, Buildings Program
American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy



Nicole Dunbar
Product Manager
Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance



Joe Vukovich
Energy Efficiency Advocate
Natural Resources Defense Council

⁵ <https://www.homedepot.com/b/Outdoors-Outdoor-Heating-Patio-Heaters/N-5yc1vZc6nf>. Accessed on 3/31/2022.

⁶ It seems that DOE is stating that it is scaling data from an old dataset (analysis years 2005-2013 in the 2015 TSD) to generate new data (analysis years 2016-2020 in the current NOPD). However, with data for these years available on the HPBA webpage, it is unclear why it would be necessary to use the data in Table 9.3.1 of the TSD.

⁷ The average of the ‘HPBA Shipments Data’ from 2005-2013 in Table 9.3.1 is 31% lower than the average shipments of gas appliances published on the HPBA webpage from those same years.

⁸ <https://www.regulations.gov/document/EERE-2014-BT-STD-0036-0002>. p. 9-2 to 9-3.

⁹ In the 2015 TSD, DOE noted that match-lit products would not be impacted by the proposed prescriptive requirement disallowing a standing pilot light.

<https://www.regulations.gov/document/EERE-2014-BT-STD-0036-0002>. p. 3-1.

¹⁰ From the LBNL 2017 hearth survey: 71% of fireplaces and log sets use a standing pilot, 18% use intermittent ignition, and 12% are match-lit.

¹¹ In particular, we understand that demand for outdoor heaters may have increased significantly, especially in the hospitality industry.