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Petition of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to Exempt from Federal Preemption
Massachusetts' 90% Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency Standard for Non-Weatherized Gas
Furnaces

Comment On: EERE-2009-BT-PET-0024-0001

Energy Efficiency Program for Consumer Products: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Petition for
Exemption From Federal Preemption of Massachusetts' Energy Efficiency Standard for Residential
Non-Weatherized Gas Furnaces

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Comment on EERE-2009-BT-PET-0024-DRAFT-0007

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Organization: ENE (Environment Northeast)

General Comment

Please see attached file.

Attachments

EERE-2009-BT-PET-0024-DRAFT-0007.1: Comment on EERE-2009-BT-PET-0024-DRAFT-0007.1



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Via First Class Mail and Federal Comment Portal

March 26, 2010

Ms. Brenda Edwards-Jones
United States Department of Energy
Building Technologies Program
Mailstop EE-2J
Room 1J-018
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585-0121

Petition of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Furnace Efficiency Standard
EERE-BT-PET-0024

Dear Ms. Edwards-Jones:

On behalf of ENE (Environment Northeast), I write to support Massachusetts' October 1, 2009 Petition to Exempt from Federal Preemption of Massachusetts' 90% Annual Fuel Efficiency ("AFUE") Standard for Non-weatherized Gas Furnaces ("the Petition.")

ENE is a non-profit organization that researches and advocates innovative policies that tackle our environmental challenges while promoting sustainable economies. ENE is at the forefront of efforts to combat global warming with solutions that promote clean energy, clean air and healthy forests. We have offices in four New England states, including Massachusetts, where we have been advocates for strong energy efficiency policies.

Emissions from fossil fuel combustion contribute greatly to global warming, energy costs burden consumers, and, energy independence is fast becoming synonymous with national security.

Massachusetts faces "unusual and compelling" energy-related circumstances due to its geography, climate and energy markets. Setting aggressive appliance standards, such as the one presented in the Petition, is critical to reducing energy consumption in a least-cost manner. A combination of high energy prices plus long cold winters¹ results in Massachusetts residents needing to spend more on energy than the average U.S. resident. In addition, a disproportionately high number of renters in Massachusetts means that a greater number of Massachusetts residents have little control to choose the efficiency of the furnace used to heat their homes.

¹ Massachusetts residents are burdened by some of the highest energy costs in the nation. In addition, the number of "heating degree days" in Massachusetts greatly exceeds the national average.

In recent years, Massachusetts has made energy and climate policy a focal point for innovation and environmental stewardship. Efficiency and greenhouse gas (“GHG”) reduction goals laid out in recently enacted Massachusetts legislation—the Global Warming Solutions Act (“GWSA”), 2008 Mass. Acts Ch. 298, and the Green Communities Act (“GCA”), 2008 Mass. Acts Ch. 169—reflect these realities. The GWSA requires the Commonwealth to reduce GHG emissions between 10% and 25% by 2020, by 80% (from 1990 levels) by 2050, and to set interim GHG emission limits for 2020, 2030, and 2040. The energy efficiency goals in the GCA include reducing fossil fuel use in buildings by 10% (from 2007 levels) by increasing the efficiency of both equipment (e.g. appliances) and the building envelope, and meeting at least 25% of the Commonwealth’s electric load through energy efficiency and other demand-reduction measures.

To achieve these goals, Massachusetts must implement a host of effective, least-cost tools for reducing energy use and GHG emissions, including the product and appliance standards. If granted, the 90% AFUE standard would produce real benefits for Massachusetts—it would greatly reduce energy use, costs, and GHG emissions. As explained in the Petition, implementing the standard would, between 2013 and 2030, save the state approximately 19.4 million therms in terms of gas usage and \$144 million in heating costs, and reduce GHG emissions by approximately 100,000 metric tons over the same time period. The average household buying a 90% AFUE furnace would see savings of approximately \$3,600 over the life of the furnace—approximately \$180 in annual fuel costs.

We recognize that there is a separate Agreement² among various industry groups (AHRI and others) and various energy efficiency advocacy groups (American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy and others) which urges DOE to adopt the 90% AFUE standard in many states. However, the absence of a deadline for acting on this voluntary agreement creates a risk of a missed opportunity. I therefore urge you to approve the Massachusetts petition by or before the October 2010 deadline for acting on the Massachusetts petition.

Implementing the 90% AFUE standard is integral to Massachusetts meeting its GHG reduction goals and energy use priorities, will save money for Massachusetts consumer, and will serve as a model for other states and the nation as a whole. I strongly urge you to grant the Commonwealth’s petition.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

/s/ Daniel L. Sosland

Daniel L. Sosland
Executive Director

² “Agreement on Legislative and Regulatory Strategy for Amending Federal Energy Efficiency Standards, Test Procedures, Metrics and Building Code Provisions for Residential Central Air Conditioners, Heat Pumps, Weatherized and Non-Weatherized Furnaces and Related Matters, October 13, 2009,” available at: <http://www.standardsasap.org/documents/Furnace-ACAgreement.pdf>.