

Aprilaire, a division of Research Products Corporation

Please find attached.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this rulemaking in advance.

February 3rd, 2022

Linda Kildahl
Rulemaking Lead
Washington Department of Ecology
linda.kildahl@ecy.wa.gov

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Dear Ms. Kildahl,

On behalf Research Products Corporation, we write to you to provide comments on the Draft Rulemaking Language for Chapter 173-443 WAC, Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCS). We are appreciative of the opportunity to provide early feedback to ameliorate this regulation.

Based in Madison, Wisconsin, Research Products Corporation (RPC) was founded in 1938 and is an established industry leader in residential, commercial, and agricultural indoor air quality and environmental and humidity control. Our brands include AprilAire, which provides residential solutions that include humidifiers, dehumidifiers, thermostats, air purifiers, and ventilation; DriSteem, which designs and manufactures humidification systems for the commercial market; and Anden, which provides environmental control solutions (including humidifiers and dehumidifiers) built for commercial and industrial agricultural applications. We are strongly supportive of the Department's mission to protect, preserve, and enhance Washington's environment for current and future generations.

We write specifically in regard to the implementation date for whole-home and other large dehumidifiers. We note that the draft language in WAC 173-443-040 requires residential dehumidifiers to use a refrigerant with less than 750 GWP by January 1st 2024, which represents a one-year extension from similar California rules. However, we note that there is not yet a definition for Residential Dehumidifiers and would **request that, in setting a definition, the Department adopts the same definition as that adopted in California—and for the same reasons as those described by the California Air and Resources Board (CARB) in their response to comments.**¹ The definition adopted by California clarifies that "Residential Dehumidifiers" includes only those portable appliances and not whole-home, agricultural or larger dehumidification equipment.

Chiefly, we are concerned about the implementation date for Whole-Home Dehumidifiers, which are dehumidifiers installed similarly to central air conditioners as opposed to room ACs

¹ See CARB Response to comments 262 and 263, among others, in their final statement of reasons.
<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/sites/default/files/barcu/regact/2020/hfc2020/fsorrevised.pdf>

and other small air conditioning “room-only” appliances. Unlike portable appliances, central AC’s were only authorized to use low GWP, lightly flammable refrigerants by the EPA in 2021, following SNAP Rule 23. For this reason, manufacturers have not yet designed appliances using those refrigerants nor have very many components been certified by Underwriter Laboratories (UL) at the sizes required for these appliances. This is unlike very small Air Conditioning appliances which have been allowed to incorporate flammable refrigerants by the EPA since SNAP Rule 19 which was finalized over 5 years ago.

We propose delaying the applicability date to 2025 in order to avoid a less-environmentally favorable result. Individuals seeking to dehumidify their homes have two choices: They can either use an air conditioner in an untested and unregulated “Dehumidification mode” or use dehumidifiers optimized to remove moisture from air. By prohibiting efficient whole-home dehumidifiers earlier than central air conditioners, the Department would sacrifice energy efficiency for the sake of reducing green-house gas emissions, a strategy that would ultimately harm consumers for no net environmental benefit.

Finally, we make this request for practical purposes to enable manufacturers and distributors to plan a workable transition and avoid disrupting the dehumidification supply chain. As you are aware, manufacturers are starting to transition away from high GWP Refrigerants driven by the Federal Phasedown of the AIM Act. At the same time, states (California, WA) are beginning to put in motion rules prohibiting equipment at a state-level. Finally, state building codes across the country still need to be updated to even allow for the installation of appliances with A2L refrigerants—although we recognize that WA has already done so. With all of these moving pieces, ensuring that regulations are consistent across the Union allows manufacturers to plan and launch products in a way that does not confuse distributors and consumers.

In closing, we would like to once again thank the department for providing early rulemaking language that allows us to provide early feedback and plan ahead.

Thank you

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