MAINE ENERGY Marketers Association

EPA's Area Source Boiler Rule

The Maine Energy Marketers recently distributed information to their membership highlighting an exemption from EPA's Area Source Boiler rule for units that meet the definition of "hot water heater". A hot water heater is defined as: a closed vessel with a capacity of no more than 120 US gallons in which water is heated by combustion of gaseous or liquid fuel and is withdrawn for use external to the vessel atpressures not exceeding 160 psig, including the apparatus by which the heat is generated and allcontrols and devices necessary to prevent water temperatures from exceeding 210 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Maine DEP asked EPA to confirm a practical interpretation of this definition, in light of the intent expressed in the preamble to the rule to exclude "residential-type" boilers. After a great deal of recent discussion, EPA has agreed that the type and size of boilers we would expect to encounter at inns, bed and breakfast establishments, and other similar businesses would not be subject to the Area Source Boiler rule. We expect that only extremely large or unique boilers may be subject. EPA plans to provide further clarification on which boilers qualify for this exemption in their reconsideration of the rule.

In order to determine if a particular boiler meets EPA's definition of a hot water heater, we recommend that the owner consult with their boiler technician or manufacturer regarding the temperature and pressure settings for the unit. EPA Region 1 staff are available to assist boiler owners at (617) 918-8805 or R1boilerHelp@epa.gov. Maine DEP staff Lisa Higgins is also available to provide assistance at (207) 287-7023 or lisa.higgins@maine.gov.