

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	24-OIR-03
Project Title:	Energy Data Collection - Phase 3
TN #:	271620
Document Title:	Whitney Squire Comments - Comments of the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of California on Proposed Equipment Sales Data Collection
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Whitney Squire
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	7/24/2026 3:30:05 PM
Docketed Date:	7/24/2026

*Comment Received From: Whitney Squire
Submitted On: 7/24/2026
Docket Number: 24-OIR-03*

Comments of the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of California on Proposed Equipment Sales Data Collection

Please see attached document. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

July 21, 2026

California Energy Commission
Docket Unit
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Docket No. 24-OIR-03 | Comments of the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of California on Proposed Equipment Sales Data Collection

Dear Commissioners:

PHCC of California is the statewide trade association for the Open Shop / Merit Shop in the plumbing and HVAC industry, and we've been part of this state's contractor community since 1900. We're writing to comment on the Commission's continued push for a mandatory equipment sales data collection framework for HVACR and water-heating products, because the people who install and service this equipment, and who deal directly with the customers whose information is at stake, have not had much of a voice in this discussion so far. That's the gap we're here to fill.

In our previous comments, PHCC of California stated that it does not support the proposed data collection framework for the HVACR and water-heating market, regardless of which party in the supply chain ends up doing the reporting. We do not agree with the underlying premise that the California Energy Commission (CEC) needs this level of visibility into private market transactions. We have concerns that what is being proposed may not be clearly authorized under existing statutes, nor has it been weighed fairly against the cost it would impose on the businesses that would have to comply.

We find the statutory authority argument Rheem Manufacturing raised in its comments on the CEC's prior Request for Information persuasive, and we join it here. None of the statutory citations the CEC has relied on grant it the authority it is asserting.

AB 2021 requires the CEC to develop efficiency improvement plans and recommend statutory changes to the Legislature. It doesn't authorize the Commission to collect market data on its own. SB 350 gives the CEC authority to create a "responsible contractor policy," but only for ratepayer-funded energy efficiency programs, not the entire HVAC and water-heating market. Furthermore, SB 350 specifically requires legislative approval before that authority is expanded, which has not happened. SB 1414 authorizes state agencies, including the Commission, to improve permitting and inspection compliance, but only for central air conditioners and heat pumps. The legislation does not include furnaces, water heaters, or any other equipment scoped in this proposal.

Lastly, SB 795, from the 2023–24 session, would have given the CEC the authority to commence compliance tracking; however, it never made it out of the Legislature.

The CEC is, however, required by statute to weigh the compliance burden on industry against the public benefit of the data. Rheem specifically cited that the Commission's cost estimates assume this reporting work can be done at an accountant's pay grade, when compliance and data-governance work typically requires legal department oversight in addition to the individuals compiling the reports. PHCC members are not large organizations with in-house legal counsel, but rather small, independently owned contracting businesses with no legal department, no compliance staff, and no one whose job it is to manage data reporting obligations. The trickle-down effect on contractors, through higher prices or new paperwork from suppliers, is going to place a large burden on the smallest businesses in this industry, which is exactly who our organization represents.

Our position is that the Commission shouldn't adopt a data collection framework at all. We do, however, recognize that the Commission believes it is obligated by statute to move forward in some form, and we're aware that the Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Distributors International (HARDI), the distributor trade association, has put forward an alternative called the "Partnership for Equipment Sales Data Collection," which would route

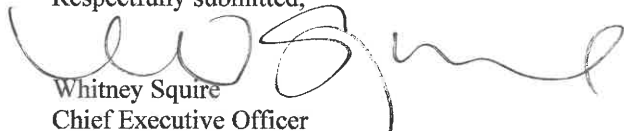
distributor and retailer sales data through a third-party clearinghouse, the Unitary Market Intelligence Project, rather than having that data reported directly to the state.

If the CEC plans to move forward, we think the clearinghouse approach is the least harmful of the two options on the table. A model that keeps contractor names, customer identities, and account-level data protected from potential data breaches or misuse is better than one that doesn't. HARDI's proposal at least avoids disclosing our members' purchasing patterns and supplier relationships to the state and, eventually, in front of the public through a records request. That's a real improvement.

While we support the conceptual framework HARDI outlined, there are also concerns with the clearinghouse idea worth flagging. HARDI's own proposal admits that zip-code-level data would reflect where equipment was sold, not where it was installed, because contractors stock inventory and don't always sell and install in the same place. If the real goal here is accurate visibility into installed equipment for electrification tracking or Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR) forecasting, sales data alone doesn't get the CEC there. We raised this in our earlier comments and still think it's the more direct answer: a point-of-sale registration approach, captured at the time of installation, would give the CEC better data than a sales clearinghouse ever could. As the CEC considers this proposal and alternatives like HARDI's, we welcome further conversation and encourage the CEC to reach out to other labor associations as well.

To summarize, we think a third-party clearinghouse like what HARDI has proposed would suffice, provided purchaser data and their relationships with suppliers remain confidential. We further believe the Commission needs to continue exploring options for mending the broken building permit and inspection system, so that installation-level compliance falls on the beneficiary of the regulated products, not those selling or installing them. We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on this issue.

Respectfully submitted,



Whitney Squire
Chief Executive Officer
Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of California