

## DOCKETED

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**APSP Inflatable Spa Comments on Docket No. 15-AAER-02**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

August 12, 2016

California Energy Commission  
Docket No. 15-AAER-02  
1516 9th Street, MS-4  
Sacramento, CA 95814

To Whom It May Concern:

The Association of Pool and Spa Professionals (APSP), the International Hot Tub Association (IHTA) of the APSP and represented manufacturers of the industry would like to thank the California Energy Commission and its staff members for the opportunity to review and comment on the **Revised Analysis of Efficiency Standards for Pool Pumps and Motors and Spas** (Analysis) published on June 16, 2016.

Within the report, the Commission has outlined a detailed plan aimed at reducing energy consumption of defined portable spa products which provides valuable savings for consumers across California. On behalf of the representatives of the industry, this initiative is both respected and supported.

Inflatable spa products began acquiring a permanent spot in retail and specialty spa shops across the country as early as 2012 due to their dramatically lower price points, plug and play set up, and user friendly retail packaging. Now, low to medium income consumers, along with consumers who live in rental properties, have the ability to own and enjoy a fully functioning spa.

Inflatable spas are designed for easy disassembly (deflated, folded and stored in retail packaging) and storage during winter months. As a result, they are typically used for the 6-7 warmest months of the year, and stored during the months when standby energy consumption for other portable spas is at its highest. Therefore, the efficiency formula presented in the analysis presented by the Commission in the Revised Report does not accurately reflect and substantially overstates the energy consumed by an inflatable spa on an annual basis.

Per the Commission's calculations and assumptions, the energy usage of inflatable spas run continuously equates to \$65 per month for the California consumer. Using the Commission's assumptions, if the cost of the item at retail equals \$310 with a total lifespan of 3 years, then the total cost of owning and operating an inflatable spa equals roughly \$2,650.

The data collected through actual testing of prevalent inflatable spa models currently sold in the market shows much smaller figures in energy consumption. Also, factoring in the seasonal usage into the overall monthly costs shows that total lifetime cost of spas is not as burdensome as the Commission had assumed.

Average Measured Normalized Standby Power: 426 (E/t)  
Total watts per month: 426 (E/t) x 720 hours = 306.72KWh  
Total cost per month @ \$0.1619KWh = \$49.65

As these products are seasonal, we assume a 7-month usage and therefore a normalized monthly cost of **\$28.96** over a year. If manufacturers could implement 20% energy savings via improvements on the shell and cover, then these costs would reduce to \$23.17. Total costs over 3-year lifespan, plus cost of product at \$310, equals roughly \$1,144, less than that of a portable hard shell spa.

Due to the fact that these products are relatively new to the market, the Commission has not previously considered the performance of this product category in their testing, led by Andrew Hamill of California Polytech University and published in September 2012. For instance, the 2014 IOU CASE report on portable electric spas makes no mention of this new category of inflatable spas as it continued to use the traditional definition: Portable electric spas are aboveground, self-contained, factory-built spas or hot tubs, with equipment to heat and circulate water. The term “portable” refers to the fact that these units are aboveground, not permanently installed. Further, the report states that “most manufacturers already insulate the shell and base of the spa using a combination of foam or fiberglass insulation, radiant barriers or construction techniques that use the siding/bottom of the spa fully enclose the spa cavity to retain heat. According to the Database, over 99 percent of spas sold in California are “fully-insulated.” The 2014 Appliance Efficiency Regulations states “Portable electric spa” means a factory-built electric spa or hot tub, supplied with equipment for heating and circulating water.” The Commission in the current proposed rule now seeks to clearly incorporate this new category of spas in the definition: “Portable electric spas are factory-built, **free-standing electric spas or hot tub units that can be rigid, flexible, or inflatable.** They are defined as above-ground units that are electrically heated and not permanently installed in the ground or attached to a pool.”

The July 2015 effective date of the administrative enforcement process for Title 20 focused attention on the applicability of the rule to Inflatable spas. Given the Commission’s unofficial position in mid-2015 that Inflatable spas fall within the scope of the rule, in effect all inflatable spas became illegal for sale and distribution throughout California as all inflatable spa products on the market tested significantly over the allowable standby energy consumption levels: on average approximately 125% higher than the allowable limits, (although, as explained above their actual energy consumption on an annual basis is far closer to that of conventional spas of similar size.) This has resulted in eliminating choice for a significant consumer demographic as well as negatively impacting manufacturers and retailers.

As an industry, we are committed to providing the Commission with test data and product information that was not at their disposal when the original test procedure and efficiency standards were developed. At the same time, we have a responsibility to consumers and retailers alike in working together with the Commission to ensure that these affordable, convenient products are easily accessible.

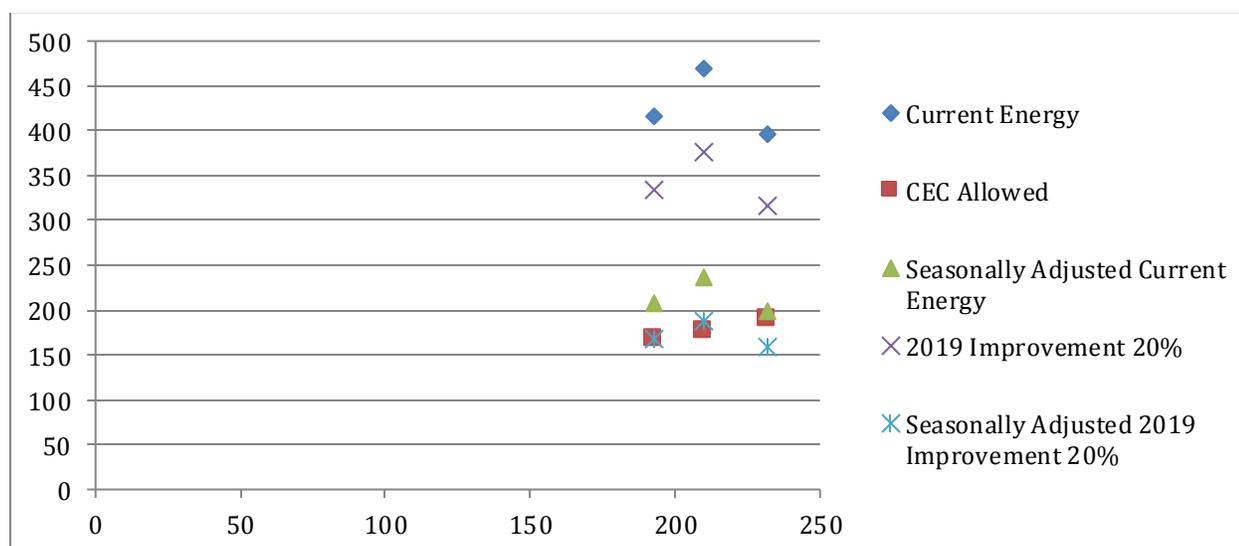
Therefore, in coordination with APSP, IHTA and manufacturers, the following proposal has been developed in order to address the goals mentioned above;

1. Create a separate category within the Title 20 definitions in which a unique efficiency standard is applied to inflatable spa products.
2. Allow immediate relief from meeting the efficiency standards for inflatable spas within Title 20 in order to cease the illegal status of the products in the California market.
3. Set higher efficiency goals for the inflatable spa category to go into effect upon final implementation of the current draft rule.

In order to achieve the above goals, the first necessary step is to create a clear and concise inflatable spa definition that clearly delineates this category of products. The industry along with APSP and IHTA supports the following proposed definition;

***A portable electric spa that is free-standing and which contains an inflatable main structure that forms the vessel for the heated water and which is capable of being deflated for storage. Inflatable spas are not designed or intended to be permanently installed in the ground and are supplied with cord-connected 110-volt equipment packages that integrate pumps, heaters, and blowers and or jets for heating, circulation, filtration, and maintenance.***

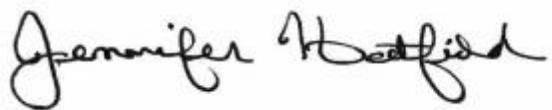
Per the current technological and market restrictions that define the inflatable spa category, the industry believes that the following efficiency standard be adopted in order to place a reasonable threshold that would eliminate the most inefficient models within the category. This standard would be held until revised Title 20 standards take effect in 2019. This would allow immediate regulation of this product category by the CEC and access by the consumer base to the product. Per manufacturer development and innovation in energy efficiency construction of inflatable spas over the past year, the industry proposes to set a 20% efficiency increase compared to the previous test results in inflatable spas. As one can see in the chart below, once the 20% adjusted efficiency level is calculated to reflect seasonal usage, the spas performance will fall directly within the standards that the Commission has set for portable spas.



In conclusion, the current state of the inflatable spa industry regulation in California needs to be addressed. This product’s appeal addresses the needs of a broad base of the consumer public due to its quality and functionality coupled with low cost and convenient inflatable feature and should once again be made available for Californians to purchase. The above proposal highlights industry’s willingness to be regulated and set meaningful improvements regarding energy efficiency.

We thank the CEC for its time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Hatfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "H".

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