

UPDATED INFORMATIVE DIGEST

Amendment to The Regulatory Limit on the Propene Content of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Intended for Use in Motor Vehicles

Sections Affected: Title 13, California Code of Regulations, section 2292.6, “Specifications for Liquefied Petroleum Gas.” This section controls the properties of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG or “propane”) that is sold commercially for use in motor vehicles in California.

Background. The Air Resources Board (ARB or Board) originally adopted section 2292.6 in 1992, to take effect on January 1, 1993. The Board included a maximum limit on the propene content of vehicular LPG. In the initial adoption, the propene limit was ten percent by volume, and the limit was to have declined to five percent on January 1, 1995. However, in 1994, the Board amended the effective date of the five-percent limit to January 1, 1997. In the interim, the propene limit is ten percent.

When the Board adopted the standards for vehicular LPG and other alternative fuels, it set essentially identical standards for (1) the fuel sold commercially in California for motor vehicle use, and (2) the fuel used in certification testing of new motor vehicles to determine whether the vehicles comply with the applicable emission standards. The broad objective of the commercial fuel standards was to assure that motor vehicles designed to use alternative fuels such as LPG will have fuels available that are of consistent quality and produce the expected emission benefits. The limited data on emissions now available indicate that LPG vehicles have greater emissions of ozone precursors and carbon monoxide when using LPG with a propene content at ten percent than when using LPG with the propene at five percent.

The Amendments. In this rulemaking, the ARB has delayed the five-percent limit on the propene content of LPG sold commercially for use in motor vehicles be delayed until January 1, 1999. The Board has also delayed until January 1, 1999, the increase in the minimum propane content from 80 percent to 85 percent. The amendments are in response to a petition from the Western Propane Gas Association (WPGA). In the petition, WPGA contended that if the limit on the propene content is reduced to five percent on January 1, 1997, there will be insufficient complying LPG to allow the continued supply of LPG to vehicles that now use that fuel. The staff concurred that implementation of the five-percent propene content standard on January 1, 1997 will likely result in a vehicular LPG supply problem in northern California and in the San Joaquin Valley. In adopting the amendments, the Board expressed its intent that it will not adopt a further postponement of the five percent propene content standard for vehicular LPG, and that by the end of 1998 the Board either will adopt an appropriate consensus standard for the vehicular LPG propene content of vehicular LPG if one is developed, or will have the five percent propene content standard become applicable.