

(2) The minutes of all meetings of the Council shall be made available to and readily accessible by the public.

(n) Annual report

Each year the Council shall prepare and make publicly available a report which includes an identification and description of all programs and projects undertaken by the Council during the previous year as well as those planned for the coming year. Such report shall also detail the allocation or planned allocation of Council resources for each such program and project.

(Pub. L. 104-284, § 5, Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3371; Pub. L. 113-269, § 2(a), Dec. 18, 2014, 128 Stat. 2947.)

AMENDMENTS

2014—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 113-269 inserted “to train propane distributors and consumers in strategies to mitigate negative effects of future propane price spikes,” after “to enhance consumer and employee safety and training.”.

§ 6405. Assessments

(a) Amount

The Council shall set the initial assessment at no greater than one tenth of 1 cent per gallon of odorized propane. Thereafter, annual assessments shall be sufficient to cover the costs of the plans and programs developed by the Council. The assessment shall not be greater than one-half cent per gallon of odorized propane, unless approved by a majority of those voting in a referendum in both the producer and the retail marketer class. In no case may the assessment be raised by more than one tenth of 1 cent per gallon of odorized propane annually.

(b) Ownership

The owner of odorized propane at the time of odorization, or the time of import of odorized propane, shall make the assessment based on the volume of odorized propane sold and placed into commerce. Assessments collected are payable to the Council on a monthly basis by the 25th of the month following the month of such collection. Propane exported from the United States to another country is not subject to the assessment.

(c) Alternative collection rules

The Council may establish an alternative means of collecting the assessment if another means is found to be more efficient and effective. The Council may establish a late payment charge and rate of interest to be imposed on any person who fails to remit or pay to the Council any amount due under this chapter.

(d) Investment of funds

Pending disbursement pursuant to a program, plan, or project, the Council may invest funds collected through assessments, and any other funds received by the Council, only in obligations of the United States or any agency thereof, in general obligations of any State or any political subdivision thereof, in any interest-bearing account or certificate of deposit of a bank that is a member of the Federal Reserve System, or in obligations fully guaranteed as to principal and interest by the United States.

(e) State programs

The Council shall establish a program coordinating the operation of the Council with those of any State propane education and research council created by State law or regulation, or similar entity. Such coordination shall include a joint or coordinated assessment collection process, a reduced assessment, or an assessment rebate. A reduced assessment or rebate shall be 20 percent of the regular assessment collected in that State under this section. Assessment rebates shall be paid only to—

(1) a State propane education and research council created by State law or regulation that meets requirements established by the Council for specific programs approved by the Council; or

(2) a similar entity, such as a foundation established by the retail propane gas industry in that State, that meets requirements established by the Council for specific programs approved by the Council.

(Pub. L. 104-284, § 6, Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3374.)

§ 6406. Compliance

The Council may bring suit in Federal court to compel compliance with an assessment levied by the Council under this chapter. A successful action for compliance under this section may also require payment by the defendant of the costs incurred by the Council in bringing such action.

(Pub. L. 104-284, § 7, Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3374.)

§ 6407. Lobbying restrictions

No funds collected by the Council shall be used in any manner for influencing legislation or elections, except that the Council may recommend to the Secretary changes in this chapter or other statutes that would further the purposes of this chapter.

(Pub. L. 104-284, § 8, Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3375.)

§ 6408. Market survey and consumer protection

(a) Price analysis

Beginning 2 years after establishment of the Council and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Commerce, using the refiner price to end users of consumer grade propane, as published by the Energy Information Administration and other public sources, shall prepare and make available to the Council, the Secretary of Energy, and the public an analysis of changes in the price of propane relative to other energy sources. The propane price analysis shall compare indexed changes in the price of consumer grade propane to a composite of indexed changes in the price of residential electricity, residential natural gas, and refiner price to end users of No. 2 fuel oil on an annual national average basis. For purposes of indexing changes in consumer grade propane, residential electricity, residential natural gas, and end user No. 2 fuel oil prices, the Secretary of Commerce shall use a 5-year rolling average price beginning with the year 4 years prior to the establishment of the Council.