



IOWA HOUSE DEMOCRATS

BILL AND AMENDMENT SUMMARY

Boiler Inspections HF 2297

Status of Bill: House Calendar

Committee: House (57-40) Senate(26-21)

Research Analyst: Joseph Gilde; 515-281-6970; josephgilde@gmail.com

Lead Democrats: Rep. Taylor

Floor Manager: Rep. Deyoe

Summary

HF 2297 changes the threshold for inspections of boilers and how boilers in dry layup are handled.

The National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors recommends annual inspections of hot water heaters located in places of public assembly with more than 50 gallons of capacity and more than 100,000 British thermal units.

A place of public assembly is defined as the following:

1. A building or structure primarily used as a theater, motion picture theater, museum, arena, exhibition hall, school, college, dormitory, bowling alley, physical fitness center, family entertainment center, lodge hall, union hall, pool hall, casino, place of worship, funeral home, institution of health and custodial care, hospital, or child care or adult day services facility.
2. A building or structure, a portion of which is primarily used for amusement, entertainment, or instruction.
3. A building or structure owned by or leased to the state or any of its agencies or political subdivisions.

Iowa law closely mirrors this, with inspections required for boilers above 50 gallons, 50,000 BTUs. HF 2297 increases this threshold to one hundred and twenty gallons and 200,000 BTUs, both outside national recommendations. This increase in the inspection exception would exempt at least 7,648 boilers in public places from inspection.

The state boiler board has been opposed to the changes in this legislation, citing public safety concerns. Most public places with water heaters don't have trained boiler operators. The annual inspection mitigates risk. A 50 gallon water heater can fail catastrophically, posing a real risk to individuals and doing a great deal of property damage. A 30 gallon boiler exploding releases enough energy to knock a home off its foundation.

In addition to the inspection threshold changes, HF 2297 also changes procedures regarding low pressure steam boilers in dry lay-up. Under current law, these boilers must be inspected every year, with a requirement that an internal and external inspection while the boiler is operating. HF 2297 removes the requirement for the external inspection. The boiler board has raised concerns that this change will allow boilers to be put back into operation with undetected degradation from inactivity.

Current policy allows that if a boiler is in dry lay-up and not being used it can be labeled "inactive" to avoid all inspections and certificate fees.

Amendment

H-8323 by Senate: The Senate amendment defines dry lay-up as a boiler taken out of service for six months or longer, dried, drained, and cleaned with corrosion prevention measures taken.

