

manufacturers may choose to develop a voluntary approach providing a consistent measure of rated capacity.

It has also been suggested that subcategories could be identified according to the geographic location of the MWI. Facilities located in isolated, rural areas may be different than facilities located in urban areas based on their economic environment. For example, alternatives to onsite incineration (e.g., commercial medical waste treatment services) may be more limited and/or more expensive in isolated locations. The Agency specifically solicits comment on the advantages and disadvantages of subcategorizing by geographic location.

2. MACT Floor

The MACT floor refers to the minimum level of control required by the Act. For new units, the standards must not be less stringent than the emissions control that is achieved in practice by the best controlled similar unit. The MACT floors for the proposed standards were determined by evaluating the performance of control technologies and identifying MWI's that currently use what is considered to be the best control technology for each pollutant within each subcategory, as described in section V.I. Comments are requested on the Agency's conclusions regarding the MACT floors for new MWI's in each subcategory.

For existing units, the guidelines must not be less stringent than the average emission limitation achieved by the best performing 12 percent of units. The MACT floors for the proposed guidelines were determined by examining emission limitations found in air quality permits and State regulations, as described in section V.J. Because of widely varying formats used from State to State to regulate MWI's, many assumptions are necessary to standardize the regulations to a common basis. As a result, State regulations are subject to different interpretations depending on the assumptions made in standardizing them for comparison. Comments are requested on the basis for the Agency's conclusions on the MACT floors for existing MWI's in each subcategory.

Subcategorization based on size rather than, or in addition to, MWI type (as discussed above) could result in different MACT floors. For example, the MACT floor level for particulate matter emissions for a subcategory including small intermittent and/or small batch MWI's may be much less stringent than the 69 mg/dscm MACT floor identified above for intermittent and batch MWI's. If the MACT floors are found to be

significantly different than those under today's proposal, the Agency will determine if MACT levels more stringent than the MACT floors are achievable considering cost, any nonair quality health and environmental impacts, and energy requirements. The MACT floors will be reassessed following proposal.

3. Performance of Technology

While the standards and guidelines are required to reflect MACT, the Agency establishes emission limitations, rather than equipment specifications, to encourage competition and further the development of technology. Individual facilities have the flexibility of selecting the method of control used to comply with the established pollutant emission limitations. The benefits of this approach include increased competition among vendors of control devices, further development and refinement of control technologies, and lower costs, as competing control device vendors strive to meet or exceed the required performance levels at lower costs than their competitors. Competition among vendors of air pollution control equipment will ensure that the benefits of emission reduction are realized at the lowest possible costs to MWI users and to society.

In developing the proposed standards and guidelines, the EPA concluded that dry scrubbers are the only technology capable of achieving the MACT floor levels. Consequently, the proposed emission limitations have been established at levels reflecting dry scrubber performance. Once again, this does not mean that MWI's are required to use dry scrubbers. Any technology that can achieve the emission limitations may be used. On the other hand, the EPA conclusion about the performance capabilities of wet scrubbers is based on emissions data from only one MWI facility using a wet scrubber system. Vendors of wet scrubber systems believe that the wet scrubber tested by EPA is not reflective of current wet scrubber technology. They believe that current wet scrubber technologies are not only capable of achieving the MACT floor levels, but may also be capable of achieving the proposed emission limitations for all pollutants. As a result, while the preamble assumes the use of a dry scrubber system to comply with the proposed emission limits, it appears that high efficiency wet scrubber systems as well as dry scrubber systems may be capable of achieving the proposed emission limits.

In addition, vendors of wet scrubber systems believe that wet scrubber

systems are able to achieve the proposed emission limitations at about half the estimated total annual costs of dry scrubber systems. Wet scrubber vendors also claim that wet scrubber systems currently not capable of complying with the proposed emission limitations could be retrofitted to do so at a reasonable cost. Users of MWI's that have already installed less efficient wet scrubber systems to comply with State and/or local regulations may be able to upgrade their existing wet scrubber system to comply with the proposed emission limits. The Agency is interested in this alternative in part because a number of facilities have installed wet scrubber controls in recent years in an effort to meet State standards. If the alternative is not available, these facilities may have to remove their wet scrubbers and replace them with more expensive dry scrubbers. The Agency is interested in data on the number of facilities that have installed wet scrubbers and the likely cost of replacing the wet scrubbers with dry scrubber technology.

While upgrading an existing wet scrubber system may result in lower total annual costs than installing a new dry scrubber system, most facilities may still find that alternative disposal options, such as offsite contract disposal or onsite autoclaving, are less expensive. Consequently, the EPA believes that the use of wet scrubber systems to comply with the proposed standards and guidelines will have essentially the same impact on shifts away from onsite incineration as the use of dry scrubber systems. In fact, the use of any add-on control system will increase the costs of onsite incineration such that alternatives to onsite incineration become more economical.

Because the issue of wet scrubber performance is important to MWI users, EPA specifically solicits further information on wet scrubber systems. The EPA is requesting emissions data that could be used to evaluate the performance of wet scrubber systems and to determine the capability of these systems in achieving the MACT floor levels and/or the proposed emission limitations. Sufficient data are available on emissions of CO, opacity, NO_x, SO₂, and HCl for use in developing the proposed standards and guidelines. The Agency specifically solicits data on PM, Pb, Cd, Hg, and CDD/CDF emissions.

If new data on wet scrubber performance shows that wet scrubbers are capable of achieving the MACT floor levels, then EPA would have to review the decision to base the emission limitations on dry scrubbers by examining the additional costs and emission reductions achieved by dry