



the LOOKOUT

Voice of the **NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION**
P.O. Box 4111, Annapolis, Maryland 21403-4111

Volume XXXX No. 1

April 2010

Johnnie Owen, Editor

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Legislative Director, Earl M Waesche

Ethanol Percentage Increase, Ruling by EPA

The EPA has indicated it is on track for a final decision on the E15 waiver this summer based on a new set of tests conducted on late model motor vehicles. The EPA may grant a "partial waiver" after completion of this limited testing (none on marine engines). This testing was not based on the original petition from Growth Energy and thus was not available for public comment. Thus NBF signed on to a group letter from a number of organizations to the EPA requesting it allow the public an opportunity to comment on any new findings prior to a final decision on E15. As stated in the letter: "We write to express our concern that EPA may decide to allow the introduction into commerce of mid-level ethanol blends such as E15, based on new information that was not available for public comment when the docket was open last year" Another round of public comment could slow down final approval of E15.

In the meantime a major fuel pump manufacturer, Dresser Wayne, has been approved by Underwriters Laboratories for fuel pumps that dispense ethanol blends up to 25%. The ethanol industry is vying to increase the number of blender pumps across the country.

Additionally according to Trade Only the Iowa state senate has introduced legislation that requires state gas stations to sell only ethanol blended fuel except for certain qualified vehicles, including boats and other non-road engines.

Ocean Policy Task Force Interim Recommendations

The President's Council on Environmental Quality has published its interim report on ocean policy which has generated significant responses. The Task Force was

charged with developing a national policy for conserving and managing ocean territories and the Great Lakes. Ten organizations provided a group response with extensive comments challenging the policies and objectives alluded to in the report. Among those were "In the absence of a clear policy statement in the Interim Report prioritizing recreation, we remain concerned that the proposed new layers of bureaucratic and new spatial planning in the marine environment will converge into vast areas eventually being closed off to recreational uses." The term "spatial planning" and its many implications were questioned many times in the 13 page comment. All of the comments were well thought out and presented; generally citing the negative implications of a federal bureaucracy managing our oceans and Great Lakes and that more clarity is needed on how any new national oceans policy would impact boating and fishing.

H.R. 2548, Keep Americas Waterfront Working Act

This important legislation as reported in the NASBLA newsletter amends the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 to require establishment of a Working Waterfronts Grant program to be administered by state agencies to promote and protect public access. These grants will allow states to determine which waterfronts are at risk and establish priorities for those needing protection. A hearing was conducted by the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife in which Rep. Pingree, the bill's sponsor, testified "Developing a working waterways grant program is an important part of ensuring our coastal economy remains strong" and that the legislation is key in preserving our nation's marinas and its many boating opportunities.

The following letter was sent to Rep. Pingree by National Boating Federation

The Honorable Chellie Pingree U.S. House of Representatives
1037 Longworth House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

The members of the National Boating Federation (NBF) were very pleased to learn of your introduction and support of H. R. 2548, the Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act. We applauded your efforts on this most important issue of maintaining public access to our waterways and recognizing the significant contribution the boating community makes to our nation's economy. NBF is the largest nationwide alliance of recreational boating organizations, consisting of over two million members.

The public awareness and gravity of this situation was evident by the large attendance at the Boating Access Forum in May 2007 in Norfolk VA. There were many presentations giving examples of how marinas and recreational and commercial fishing facilities were eliminated by declarations of eminent domain or other means. The risk to our working waterfronts continues to this day although some municipalities have enacted rules or regulations which reduce the risk.

With our nation's many miles of coastline, the importance of public access to these areas cannot be minimized. These waterways provide restaurants, repair facilities, dockage, etc. which all provide employment and contribute significantly to our economy.

We believe your bill will be a great step forward in maintaining the many assets provided on our waterfronts for the boating community and the general public.

Again we thank you for your efforts in protecting access to our waterfronts and maintaining a strong coastal economy as we look forward to passage of H.R. 2548.

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NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION POSITION STATEMENT REGARDING THE USAGE OF ETHANOL IN MARINE GASOLINE

Background

There is a federal mandate for producers to use a certain amount of ethanol and no apparent economical way to keep it out of marinas. Due to the corrosive nature of ethanol and its affinity for water, ethanol is added at the tank truck just before delivery and the same truck that goes to the corner gas station also goes to the marina.

Negative Issues Associated With The Use Of Ethanol In Marine Gasoline

First. it is a safety issue for those boats equipped with fiberglass gas tanks, generally those made before the mid-80's. Ethanol tends to dissolve certain resins, which then find their way through the engine intake and coat intake valves, which makes them stick causing bent pushrods or worse. More important is the possibility of a gas tank degrading to the point of leaking. As anyone knows, gasoline vapors in the bilge is an explosion waiting to happen. In addition to boats such as Hatteras, Bertram, and Chris Crafts made before the mid-80's, some smaller boats, notably Boston Whaler Montauks, have small above-deck fiberglass gas tanks. Some of these tanks have been reported leaking as well. Any boat with a fiberglass gas tank that was not specifically designed for ethanol should be suspect. There are some resins that are immune to ethanol (some vinyl esters, for example) and are used in underground gasoline storage tanks, but most resins, including common epoxies are not able to withstand contact with ethanol. Though it's no comfort to those with fiberglass gas tanks, fortunately, only a very small percentage of boats have them.

Second. is that the addition of alcohol to gasoline adversely affects the volatility of the fuel, which could cause vapor lock, causing a marine engine to fail to start when called upon to do so, or to stall, both potentially dangerous situations.

Third. ethanol may also affect many plastics and rubber. Alcohol present in automobile gasoline is not compatible with the rubber seals and materials used in some boats, however, most fuel hoses made after 1984 and marked with SAE J 1527 are designed to withstand ethanol. Some older fuel filter bowls made of plastic may be affected and some seals, o-rings, or plastic parts could be damaged. This damage creates deposits that tend to clog marine fuel systems, causing possible engine failure at inopportune times.

Fourth. is phase separation, which happens when the fuel is cooled as a result of the vessel operating in winter weather. Ethanol absorbs water readily and as little as .5% water will cause a phase separation. When the alcohol separates from the gasoline, it may carry water that has been held in solution and that cannot be handled by the

sediment bowl or fuel filter. This may affect performance and drivability. A water/ethanol mixture, being heavier than gasoline, will sink to the bottom of the fuel tank, leaving a lower octane gasoline layer on top. This low octane gasoline can cause performance issues with 4-stroke engines, but can cause damage to 2-stroke engines due to a lean condition. In addition 2-stroke engines may be damaged if a quantity of water/ethanol is ingested since the proper lubricating oil won't be present. Keeping water out of the tank is obviously important.

Fifth. and another problem with the introduction of ethanol comes from mixing gasoline with MTBE and gasoline with ethanol, especially in the presence of water. This chemical soup is believed by some manufacturers to create a gel-like substance that clogs passages in carburetors, most notably in outboards. Stalled engines and shop bills are the result. Fuel injected engines seem to suffer much less than carbureted ones.

When ethanol is initially used, the boater may experience more frequent fuel filter replacement as ethanol's superior solvent properties cleans old varnish and other contaminants from the tank. Gasoline with ethanol also typically delivers slightly less fuel economy due to its lesser energy value.

WHEREFORE, the *National Boating Federation* finds that the use of ethanol in gasoline used by marine engines poses a major hazard and recommends that ethanol-free gasoline be made available to recreational boat operators.

Tom Dogan
President, N.B.F.

DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH AUTOMATIC CHANNEL SWITCHING ON DIGITAL SELECTIVE CALLING (DSC) EQUIPPED VHF MARINE RADIOS

It has come to the Coast Guard's attention that an *automatic channel switching* feature found on certain models of Digital Selective Calling (DSC) equipped VHF marine radios may create an unintended hazard by automatically switching from a working channel that might be in use at the time to Channel 16 when the VHF marine radio receives a DSC distress alert, distress alert acknowledgment or other DSC call where a VHF channel number has been designated. This could happen without a vessel/radio operator's immediate knowledge and could initiate an unsafe condition by which the vessel/radio operators would believe they were communicating on a working channel

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OCT 20 2010 4PM DT

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such as Channel 13 when, in fact, they were actually on Channel 16. Imagine a towboat operator on the lower Mississippi River making passing agreements on VHF channel 67 and then suddenly, without warning, not being able to quickly establish communications with those vessels because his/her radio automatically switched to Channel 16 instead.

Since this unsafe condition can happen at any time, the Coast Guard **strongly recommends** disabling the *automatic channel switching* feature when maintaining a listening watch or communicating on the designated bridge-to-bridge radiotelephone, or while monitoring the vessel traffic services (VTS) channel. Radios that lack the disabling feature should not be used for bridge-to-bridge or VTS communications. The International Telecommunications Union Sector for Radio communications, Recommendation M.493-11 published in 2004 and later versions require DSC-equipped radios to provide for *disabling of this channel auto-switch feature*. In the United States, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires all DSC-equipped radios certified after March 25, 2009 to meet this requirement. Manufacturers that do not provide a disable function are encouraged to do so and to inform their customers if means for correction exist. Updated information including a listing of manufacturers of radios believed to be affected by this Safety Alert will be posted as available at <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/marcomms/gmdss/dsc.htm>. The Coast Guard **strongly reminds** radio operators and other users to always ensure they are on the proper operating channel when communicating or maintaining watch, particularly with DSC equipped radios capable of channel auto-switching. This safety alert is provided for informational purposes only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational or material requirement. Developed by the Spectrum Management and Telecommunications Policy

Division (CG-652), United States Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC. Questions should be directed to Mr. Russell Levin at (202) 475 3555 or Russell.S.Levin@uscg.mil.

NBF ANNUAL MEETING

Daytona Beach, Florida - March 27/28 2010

An exhaustive nine hour-long Executive Committee meeting on Saturday, March 27 brought intensive discussions on issues such as NBF membership and promotional materials.

Agreement was reached on the publication of our position on Ethanol rulings by EPA [see President's article], and our continued support for recreational boating-oriented facilities at water's edge.

Considerable discussion regarding NBF intervention in local issues indicated that, frequently, a "local issue" may well have future national implications. It was decided that, subject to approval of the Executive Committee, NBF intervention in some "local issues" is desirable, and recommended.

At the Annual General Meeting, March 28, 2010, satisfactory reports by the Secretary, Treasurer and Membership chair were accepted. Bill Gossard, National Transportation Safety Board was our featured speaker.

The Nominating Committee report, continuing all officers and executive committee members for another year was accepted by acclamation.

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for October 2, 2010 at Annapolis, MD.

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