

EPA approves limited E15 usage

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WASHINGTON — Ethanol proponents received some good news mixed with a caveat when the blend wall was increased by 5 percent on Oct. 13.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency waived a limitation on selling fuel that has more than ten percent ethanol, but limited use to 2007 or newer cars and light trucks.

The waiver applies to fuel that contains up to 15 percent ethanol. This represents the first of a number of actions that are needed from federal, state and industry towards commercialization of E15 gasoline blends.

EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson made the decision after a review of the Department of Energy's extensive testing and other available data on E15's impact on engine durability and emissions.

"Thorough testing has now shown that E15 does not harm emissions control equipment in newer cars and light trucks," she said.

"Wherever sound science and the law support steps to allow more home-grown fuels in America's vehicles, this administration takes those steps."

The EPA did not issue a mandate in its ruling, but it does allow individual states to take administrative or statutory action to allow E15 use.

A decision on the use of E15 in model year 2001 to 2006 vehicles will be made after EPA receives the results of additional DOE testing, which is expected to be completed in November.

However, no waiver is being granted this year for E15 use in model year 2000 and older cars and light trucks — or in any motorcycles, heavy-duty vehicles or non-road engines — because currently there is not testing data to support such a waiver.

Since 1979, up to 10 percent ethanol has been used for all conventional cars and light trucks and non-road vehicles.

Additionally, several steps are being taken to help consumers easily identify the correct fuel for their vehicles and equipment.

First, EPA is proposing E15 pump labeling requirements, including a requirement that the fuel industry specify the ethanol content of gasoline sold to retailers.

There also would be a quarterly survey of retail stations to help ensure their gas pumps are properly labeled.

The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 mandated an increase in the overall volume of renewable fuels into the marketplace reaching a 36 billion gallon total in 2022.

Growth Energy and 54 ethanol manufacturers submitted the E15 peti-

tion to EPA in March 2009.

In April 2009, EPA sought public comment on the petition and received about 78,000 comments.

The petition was submitted under a Clean Air Act provision that allows EPA to waive the act's prohibition against the sale of a significantly altered fuel if the petitioner shows that the new fuel will not cause or contribute to the failure of the engine parts that ensure compliance with the act's emissions limits.

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