

NMMA Introductory Remarks

RFS Press Call: February 4, 2013; 1:30 p.m. EST

The National Marine Manufacturers Association represents over 1500 boat builders, marine engine and marine accessory manufacturers. One of the greatest concerns facing the recreational boating industry today relates to the Renewable Fuel Standard, specifically the introduction of E15 into the marketplace. The potential for consumers to use fuel with a percentage of ethanol above 10 percent in boat engines is detrimental to the \$72 billion per year U.S. recreational boating industry, an important economic driver for large parts of the country.

Marine and other small gasoline-powered engines are designed to run on levels of ethanol at 10% volume or lower. That means that anything above E10 poses serious problems, including performance issues like stalling, corrosion leading to oil or fuel leaks, increased emissions and damaged valves, rubber fuel lines and gaskets.

Testing conducted at the Mercury Marine test facility in Fond du Lac, WI, in 2010-2011 under contract to the US Department of Energy and coordinated by the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) has proven time and time again that marine engines and, by extrapolation, other types of engines, simply cannot tolerate the high levels of additional oxygen that this fuel blend forces into the engine. On any engine this additional oxygen makes the fuel burn hotter—just as blowing on your fireplace to get it started makes the fire burn hotter—and the higher temperatures can reduce the strength of the metallic components in the engines.

NMMA is not alone in our concern, which is why we have joined this important coalition. Many manufacturers of automobiles have said that their models through 2012 are not designed to run on E15, and if your engine is damaged by doing so, your warranty is void. This same statement is true for marine engines; E15 can not only severely damage your engine, but will void any warranty protecting it.

Just a couple of weeks ago, the 2nd part of the Coordinating Research Council's study on E15 was released, focusing on automobiles and fuels. The CRC's first study on E15's impact was released last year and this second iteration focuses on fuel pump performance. Not surprisingly, the study showed an elevated incidence of fuel pump failures, part swelling and impairment of fuel measurement systems due to E15 in automobiles. This is quite similar to the damage we have seen in our own testing on marine engines. And, E15 isn't just a danger to the boat but to boaters on these boats when damage occurs. As the United States Coast Guard stated in a letter to the EPA in July 2009, the waiver to allow sale of E15 ethanol blend, "has raised concerns related to a possible reduction in the level of safety for recreational boaters" The Coast Guard went on to say in that same letter that it could not "support approval of the proposed waiver" to allow sale of E15.

Back in December of last year the American Automobile Association issued a press statement about e15 use: "Only about 12 million out of the more than 240 million light-duty vehicles on the roads today are approved by manufacturers to use E15 gasoline." AAA went on to say that, "The only vehicles currently approved by automakers to use E15 are flex-fuel models, 2001

model year and newer Porsches, 2012 model-year and newer GM vehicles, and 2013 model year Ford vehicles.”

As I am the last presenter today, let me offer a hypothetical scenario, based on what you have heard.

Suppose an organization approached the Hill today and said, “We have a great idea for a new policy. It will largely benefit a small number of people in one part of the country, and members of Congress from there will support it wholeheartedly. The downside is that it will hurt the environment; and conservation practices; and will drive up food costs; and hurt people in developing countries; and will potentially damage every small engine in the country, including those in motorcycles and snowmobiles and ATVs and lawnmowers and generators; and it will damage boat engines; and it will potentially damage most automobile engines and will void your engine warranty if you use it. But we want you to enact a law requiring the American consumer to use it anyway.”

That’s where we are today, and we think this law needs to be changed.