



NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION

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Ethanol Legislation Introduced in Senate: On Monday, 14 Sept, legislation was introduced in the Senate, S. 1666, The Mid-Level Ethanol Blends Act of 2009, to protect marine engines from the problems caused by ethanol blends in gasoline. Under the Clean Air Act the sale of mid-level ethanol is prohibited, but the ethanol industry has petitioned the EPA for a waiver to enable them to sell E15 gasoline. S. 1666 will require the EPA's Science Advisory Board study the compatibility of such fuels with current engines. According to *Trade Only*, the study would also include comprehensive analysis of available independent scientific evidence on the compatibility of mid-level ethanol fuels with the emission requirements of the Clean Air Act and the operability of engines.

In addition, the ethanol industry is attempting to amend the Interior Department's annual appropriations bill currently moving through the Senate to either authorize mid-level ethanol legislatively or potentially deny funding to the EPA if it does not grant the waiver request for E15. NBF has joined our coalition partners in a letter to the Senate opposing any such amendment to the Interior Department's appropriations bill.

Interagency Arctic Awareness Trip: Members of the Oceans Policy Task Force traveled to Alaska and the Arctic in August to observe ongoing activities and meet with community leaders and industry representatives. The increasingly accessible Arctic has significant environmental, economic and security impacts and the data collected will aid the formulation of the new Oceans Policy. The visit was facilitated by the U.S. Coast Guard and consisted of: Adm. Thad Allen, Commandant, USCG; Secretary of the Department of the Interior; NOAA Administrator; Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality and Deputy Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change.

Wallop/Breaux Reauthorization (W/B): In spite of significant effort by the newly formed Angling and Boating Alliance, the reauthorization of the Sports Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (W/B) will not be accomplished this year. In past reauthorizations this has been attached to the Highway bill and approved. However, this year the Highway bill will not be reauthorized but will be funded at its current levels through a Continuing Resolution. We will attempt to get the bill passed next year given the many items of interest to the boating public.

Boating Fatalities Increase: The Coast Guard issued a press release indicating there were 709 fatalities, 3,331 injuries and about \$54M in property damage in 2008. Contributing factors given were operator inattention, careless or reckless operation, no proper lookout, operator inexperience and passenger or skier behavior. Alcohol consumption was also cited as a contributing factor in 17% of the deaths.

RTCM Petition for Digital Message Service on VHF: The Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) has petitioned the FCC to provide a digital small message service on certain VHF channels. The petition cites greater efficiency and timeliness of digital communications on VHF radios, which would not interfere with voice communications. It is not clear why we would need digital “texting” on our VHF radios, so further investigation may be required to determine if we should support it.

OIG Report on Small Vessel Security Plan: The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has released a report on the DHS plan to address the perceived threat from small vessels to maritime security. The report indicated that, while some progress has been made, the plan lacks effective guidance and effective programs to address threats posed by small vessels. Further the report found that the strategy does not fully address the roles and responsibilities of state and local officials, performance measures, associated costs, accountability and oversight frameworks.

Ocean Policy Task Force – Interim Report: The Council on Environmental Quality has published an interim report on the recommendations of the Ocean Policy Task Force. While preliminary, the language thus far indicates a far more restricted use of our waterways. For example, the statement from the report “To implement ecosystem based coastal and marine spatial management” may indicate recommendations for tighter control of various designated spaces among our waterways.

National Recreational Boating Safety Coalition – Legislative Prospects: The Wisconsin legislature has scheduled hearings on a bill on child PFD wear for those 12 and under. Virginia has drafted a bill for PFD wear for those 12 and under and Maryland is considering one for under 13. Hawaii is considering a bill requiring Mandatory Boating Education (MBE) for all boaters. Maine has a bill to “study MBE” and Massachusetts has a MBE “carry over” bill.