

**Statement of U.S. Sen. Wayne Allard
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American Motorcyclist Association**

**U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Environment of the
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology**

**Hearing on “Mid-Level Ethanol Blends: Consumer and Technical
Research Needs”**

February 26, 2013

Chairman Andy Harris, Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on *Mid-Level Ethanol Blends: Consumer and Technical Research Needs*.

I was in public office for 26 years, but I still shake my head over the ability of the federal government to reach -- or overreach -- into the lives of the American people, and the power wielded by bureaucrats to do so.

One case in point is E15 -- a gasoline formulation that contains up to 15 percent ethanol by volume -- which could damage motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle engines.

The American Motorcyclist Association believes extensive independent testing needs to be done before E15 becomes more widely available. The key for the AMA and our members is that E15 must be proven safe for motorcycle and ATV engines. To the best of our knowledge, E15 is not approved for use in any original-equipment motorcycles or ATVs. In fact, its use can void many manufacturers' warranties.

As of today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has only approved the use of E15 in model year 2001 and newer cars, light-duty trucks and medium-duty passenger vehicles. This list does not include motorcycles or ATVs.

How is the federal government going to prevent motorcyclists from inadvertently putting E15 in their gas tanks or gas cans when getting gas at a "blender pump" with a single hose?

Here's where the EPA overreached.

Initially the EPA decided that you must buy at least four gallons of gas from that blender pump. Not one gallon. Not two gallons. Not even three gallons. Yes, the government mandated you buy at least four gallons to dilute the residual E15 in the hose.

The EPA revealed the four-gallon minimum mandate to the AMA in a letter last August responding to AMA concerns that E15 could be put in motorcycle and ATV gas tanks inadvertently when consumers use blender pumps.

Unlike an automobile or SUV that has a large fuel tank, the residual fuel left in a fueling hose could be detrimental to the performance of motorcycle or ATV engines due to the small size of their fuel tanks and the higher concentration of ethanol that would, therefore, be present in the fuel.

In addition, the use of E15 will lower fuel efficiency and possibly cause premature engine failure. In off-road engines, the effects can even be dangerous for users.

Another problem with that new EPA policy is that not all motorcycle and ATV gas tanks hold four or more gallons.

Not only did we find it unacceptable for the EPA to mandate that everyone -- including our members -- buy minimum amounts of gas, but the EPA answer simply would not work because of the sizes of many motorcycle and ATV gas tanks and the fact that off-highway riders take containers of gas with them on their trips, and most times those containers are much smaller than four gallons.

We stressed that the EPA needed to come up with a better solution.

So on Feb. 7, in response to concerns expressed by the AMA and power equipment makers, the EPA issued new guidelines to help ensure that motorcyclists and others don't inadvertently use E15 fuel.

Under the new option, retailers who use a blender pump to sell E15 and E10 fuel through the same hose must also have a separate E10/E0 fuel pump. Those retailers would be required to have a label on the blender pump that reads: "Passenger Vehicles Only. Use in Other Vehicles, Engines and Equipment May Violate Federal Law." Retailers would also be required to have signs indicating the location of the dedicated E10-or-lower fuel pump. There would be no minimum-fuel-purchase requirement at that pump.

We can only imagine how many motorists and motorcyclists will be lining up at that single pump to get E10-or-lower fuel.

Retailers who want to sell E15 also have the option of having a dedicated E15 pump or hose, or a pump that dispenses E15 and higher ethanol blends through a single hose. If a blender pump dispenses multiple fuels that include E15 and higher ethanol blends, the EPA may require a minimum purchase requirement.

The AMA has repeatedly expressed concerns to government officials and federal lawmakers about possible damage to motorcycle and ATV engines caused by the inadvertent use of E15 when the new fuel becomes widely available. The AMA also has asked that motorcycles and ATVs be part of any scientific study into the effects of E15 to ensure that the new fuel blend would not damage those engines.

It is my sincere hope that this Subcommittee continues to be proactive on this important issue affecting motorcyclists and ATV riders. The AMA and its members stand ready to serve as a resource for you and your staff as you further deliberate making our nation's fuel supply safer for all users.

Again, I wish to thank the Chairman, the Ranking Member and the Subcommittee for holding this legislative hearing on E15.