

Department of Energy E15 Causes "Severe Damage" to Marine Engines

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WASHINGTON – The results from two studies conducted by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory on the effects of E15 on marine engines were released on Friday, showing that the gasoline and ethanol blend can cause issues including drivability, materials compatibility, increased emissions, and long-term durability in outboard, stern drive and inboard engines, according to the release.

The High Ethanol Fuel Endurance study tested the effects of E15 and E0 on four-stroke and two-stroke Mercury outboard engines that included the 9.9HP four-stroke, the Verado 300HP Supercharged four-stroke and the 200 EFI two-stroke.

In addition to increase fuel consumption in two of the engines, the study showed that E15 caused damage to two out of three outboards and complete failure in the Verado 300HP engine, as well as “degraded emissions performance outside of engine certification limits,” according to the release.

The results of the study reinforced the industry’s concerns about proper warning labeling at fueling stations. In September, the NMMA, along with the Engine Products Group, filed a suit challenging the rules regarding gas pump misuse controls for gas pumps containing up to 15 percent Ethanol.

According to the NMMA, the new rules would not do enough to prevent possible damage to marine engines from possible misfueling with E15 fuel, and petitioned to require E10 fuel to also be sold at gas stations.

“Current proposals by the ethanol industry to increase the amount of ethanol in gasoline should seriously concern all boaters and owners of other small engine equipment,” said Thom Dammrich, NMMA president. “Although NMMA strongly supports renewable fuels as a means to reduce America’s dependence on foreign sources of oil and improve the environment, there is growing evidence that ethanol is not the answer to America’s energy challenge.”