

CARGO TANK TRUCK RETROFIT MANDATE

The Department of Transportation (DOT) looked closely in past years at a proposal to prohibit gasoline transport trucks from traveling on highways with gasoline in the trucks wetlines. Wetlines are pipes that mounted underneath cargo tanks and are used to transfer fuel to underground tanks. The agency considered whether to require gasoline transport trucks to be retrofitted, so that after unloading fuel, there would be no more than one liter of fuel contained in the piping. DOT did not suggest a certain method but indicated their view of purging the wetlines with compressed air was a favored method. A device has been patented that uses the DOT preferred method. After much consideration, DOT determined there were too many unresolved issues to move forward with the proposal.

Now the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has included a wetlines retrofit mandate in the Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009 (Sec. 7011. Requirements Relating to External Product Piping on Cargo Tanks Transporting Hazardous Material).

PMAA POSITION

Wetlines purging retrofits are costly, unnecessary and a safety risk. Below are concerns PMAA has with the wetlines proposal:

- Welding the patented device to cargo tank trucks and trailers presents unique safety risks to workers that have not been fully considered. Gasoline vapors can remain undetected in compartments exposing workers to dangerous welding conditions.
- To our knowledge there is only one approved device for emptying wetlines. The known device is patented by one company and a federal mandate would create anti-trust/monopoly concerns.
- The total projected per truck costs will be in the thousands of dollars. Small businesses will be forced to retire older trucks and trailers long before their useful life is complete. The market value of trucks without the purging technology would decrease by the cost to install the technology.

CURRENT LEGISLATION

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee included language in the 2009 Surface Transportation Authorization Act to mandate the removal of gasoline and other hazardous materials from cargo tank loading and unloading lines. Beginning two years after enactment (bill may not become law this year) new trucks cannot be operated without the purging technology, and beginning 2020, pre-2012 trucks will require a retrofit in order to meet the mandate to operate without wetlines.

PMAA STAFF CONTACT: Sherri Cabrera, scabrera@pmaa.org
Brandon Wright, bwright@pmaa.org