

News For Thought

EPA Clears Way to Regulate Small Engines

By Erica Werner, Associated Press Writer

Washington (AP) - The Environmental Protection Agency cleared the way Friday for regulations to limit pollution from lawn mowers, jet skis and similar small machines. Devices that clean the engines' emissions do not pose a safety problem, the EPA said. Without new pollution controls, engines under 50 horsepower would account for 18 percent of smog-forming emissions from mobile sources by 2020, the agency has estimated. Opposition from Sen. Kit Bond, R-Mo., whose home state has two factories owned by lawn mower engine maker Briggs & Stratton Corp., has delayed rules to regulate small-engine pollution.

After first trying to bar California from implementing its own small-engine rules, Bond last year insisted on a study of whether adding pollution-reducing catalytic converters to small engines could create fire risks. The EPA study released Friday concluded there are no such risks and said there can even be safety benefits from adding catalytic converters. The conclusion means EPA can move forward to issue nationwide regulations for pollution from small engines. The agency also can grant California the waiver it is seeking to implement its own small-engine pollution rules. EPA spokesman John Millett said the agency should be able to take both steps by the end of the year. Agency investigations indicate the pollution standards can be implemented "without an incremental increase in the risk of fire or burn to the consumer" and can even lead to "an incremental decrease in such risk," the study said. "EPA's thorough safety study shows that not only will California's proposed small engine regulations significantly improve our air quality, but they also present no safety concerns whatsoever for consumers and in fact may improve the safety of lawnmowers and other small engines," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., who has tangled with Bond over the issue for nearly three years. Patricia Hanz, a spokeswoman for Briggs & Stratton in Milwaukee, called the EPA study "neither comprehensive nor complete" and said the company was waiting for results from a different safety study that includes participation by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, an industry trade association. Briggs & Stratton officials have said that redesigning their engines to comply with tougher regulations would be so costly they might have to move production overseas. The company employs more than 1,000 workers in Missouri.

In a statement, Bond spokesman Rob Ostrander didn't comment on the study but said that as the EPA develops its small-engine rule, "concerned stakeholders such as the National Association of State Fire Marshals and others, whom EPA did not give a chance to comment on the safety study, can respond to this study and all the related issues such as potential job loss and plant closures."

California has the authority under the Clean Air Act to set its own pollution standards, and other states can put in place California's regulations. Bond tried to include language in a 2004 spending bill to block California from setting its own small-engine rules, but Feinstein objected. Bond then agreed to language letting California implement its own small-engine rule but requiring a federal standard to be set for other states. Friday's results came one day after a separate study, by the National Academies' National Research Council, said California's role in setting tough standards on smog-forming emissions is scientifically valid and necessary in the quest for cleaner air. That study also was sought by Bond.

Massachusetts Pro-Motorcycle Bill Clears Senate

The Massachusetts State Senate has passed Senate Bill 2368, which contains numerous provisions beneficial to motorcyclists:

Increasing civil and criminal penalties to motorists who cause accidents when they violate the 'right of way' of all other road users (including motorcyclists), and shifting the financial burden (excess medical costs and lost wages) from injured victims to the at-fault operators;

Allows owners of motorcycles to 'opt-out' of the existing motorcycle insurance system and go to a competitive market, opening the doors for more insurers to write coverages in Massachusetts;

Allows experienced motorcyclists (6 years or more) or those to take the Rider Education Course, and have private health insurance or \$50,000 in optional medical payments coverage, 'choice' of helmet wear;

A \$125 assessment to those who violate the law, with the assessment going to the State's Head Injury Trust Fund Program;

Changes in the existing motorcycle exhaust laws to limit the noise of motorcycle pipes.

The bill goes next to the House of Representatives for action.

"A lot of effort from a lot of motorcyclists the past several years lead to today's success," said Kevin Griffin of Plymouth, Chairman of the Massachusetts Motorcycle Association (MMA). "We also challenge riders who want to lower their motorcycle insurance premiums, not be victimized twice in motorcycle crashes with excessive medical bills and lost wages, and the opportunity to choose wearing a helmet or not with some restrictions, to enlist their riding friends to join the MMA or buy raffle tickets, and plan to STORM the STATE HOUSE with us Thursday, May 18th. Membership, tickets and STORM products can be purchased on-line or downloadable forms are available at www.MassMotorcycle.com." www.aimncom.com/mc_news



"WALNECK'S"

WOODSTOCK ILLINOIS

MOTORCYCLE SWAP MEET & SHOW

April 23, 2006

We will be back in
Woodstock! At the same
McHenry Co. Fairgrounds,
Route 47 & Country Club Rd.

8:00am - 3:00pm Aug. 13, 2006 too!

6000 Customers
300+ Vendors!

BRING YOUR STUFF
SELL & TRADE
CLEAN YOUR GARAGE!

"FREE" BIKE CORRAL
"FOR SALE" SIGNS OK
GOOD FOOD AVAILABLE

\$7.00 Admission "FREE PARKING" - Children Under 12 are "FREE"
Hours: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Vendors Open 6 a.m.
Antique, Classic, British, American & Modern too...
Enter your bike - \$5.00. Public Judging. Trophies Awarded about 1:30
"For Sale" signs allowed. - NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ALLOWED
Reserve your space early for indoors
(Vendors MUST Be Packed- SPACES CLEANED and Out by 4:00 p.m.)
VENDING SPACES ONLY \$40.00 INSIDE OR OUTDOORS

WALNECK'S INC.
7923 Janes Ave., Woodridge, IL 60517
630-985-2097

24th Annual NORTHEASTERN WISCONSIN
CHARITY MOTORCYCLE SHOW & DANCE
Proceeds to: Special Olympics & Peter's Pantry

MANITOWOC COUNTY EXPO

MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN

SHOW HOURS: **SAT. APRIL 29 - 10AM-9PM**
SUN. APRIL 30 - 10AM-4PM

SHOW ADMISSION: \$4 - SENIOR: \$2 - UNDER 12: FREE

Vendors - '06 Harley Softail Raffle - Food - Beverages

Dance - **SAT. APRIL 29 - 7pm-12:30am**
continuous music by: "Sonic Circus" & "Spin"

Dance Admission \$5.00 in advance - \$7.00 At the Door

CONTACT: HOBANS CYCLE SHOP - 920-726-4990 OR
E-MAIL hobanbrothers@lakefield.net

Sponsored by: the Ant Hill Mob M.C., Ltd. & Hobans Cycle Shop