

US allows higher ethanol content in gasoline for newer cars

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A tank holding Ethanol is seen at a fuel tank farm in the Global Petroleum facility in Boston, Massachusetts. The United States lifted Wednesday a cap on the amount of ethanol that can be blended into gasoline for vehicles for the first time in more than 30 years, calling it a step toward energy independence.

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In response to a request from the ethanol industry, the US [Environmental Protection Agency](#) said it would now allow ethanol to make up 15 percent of [vehicle fuel](#), up from a previous limit of 10 percent -- known as the E10 standard.

The new E15 limit only applies to cars and light trucks built since 2007,

the EPA said.

EPA chief Lisa Jackson made the decision after extensive Department of Energy (DoE) testing and reviewing data on E15's impact on engine durability and emissions, the agency said in a statement.

"Thorough testing has now shown that E15 does not harm emissions control equipment in newer cars and light trucks," Jackson said.

"Wherever sound science and the law support steps to allow more home-grown fuels in America's vehicles, this administration takes those steps," she added.

Growth Energy, a green energy activist group, and 54 [ethanol](#) manufacturers filed the petition with the EPA in March 2009 seeking the increase in the so-called "blend wall" from E10 to E15.

Growth Energy argues the increase will create as many as 136,000 new jobs in the [United States](#) and eliminate as much as 20 million tonnes of greenhouse-gas emissions from the air in a year -- the equivalent of taking 10.5 million vehicles off the road.

Increasing the domestic, renewable fuel supply would also displace some of the 12 million barrels of oil that is imported every day into the United States from countries such as Venezuela, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the group said.

The EPA said it would make a decision on the use of E15 in model year 2001 to 2006 vehicles after it receives the results of additional DoE testing, expected to be completed in November.

However, it said, no waiver was being granted this year for E15 use in model year 2000 and older cars and light trucks -- or in any motorcycles,

heavy-duty vehicles, or non-road engines -- due to the current lack of testing data to support such a waiver.

Since 1979, E10 has been the US limit for all conventional cars and light trucks, and non-road vehicles.

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