

NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION
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Ethanol Was a Key Issue in the Iowa Caucus: As reported by USA TODAY and various industry groups, marine industry players, regardless of their geographic location, had good reason to keep an eye on the results of the Iowa caucus. Since Congress in 2005 required that oil refiners blend ethanol into gasoline, the legislation has been a boon to Iowa corn farmers. As Iowa's caucus in the first step of the Democratic and Republican presidential nomination process, ethanol remains a hot topic in the state, and in all the U.S.. That's because Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, one of the Republican front-runners, has called for an end to subsidies for all forms of energy, as well as a five-year phase out of the renewable fuel mandate that created the ethanol economy in Iowa.

A coalition that includes oil companies, environmentalists, grocery manufacturers, livestock farmers and humanitarian advocates is pushing Congress to weaken or repeal the requirement. After the Iowa Caucus, the U.S. Senate could vote on a measure to roll back the Renewable Fuel Standard. Cruz decries this mandate as a Washington-driven, anti-free market scam that makes people rich. Senator Cruz wants to do away with subsidies on all energy sources, leveling the playing field and allowing the market to dictate conditions and prices.

Isobutanol - Boating's Alternative to Ethanol: Boating Industry reported that with a waiver recently approved by the Environmental Protection Agency authorizing ethanol in gasoline up to 15 percent by volume, the marine industry is looking for an alternative biofuel to what its experts say is poison to marine engines. With the well-publicized issues E15 causes in marine applications, members of the marine industry are investigating the potential of isobutanol as a biofuel, said Jeff Wasil, engineering technical expert at BRP Evinrude. "Instead of just saying E15 will cause problems, we wanted to go a step further and identify another fuel that may be of more significance to our industry," Wasil said. Isobutanol can be safely blended into gasoline at 16 percent by volume. Ethanol can only safely be used in marine engines up to a 10 percent concentration. Furthermore, isobutanol contains more energy, containing almost 90 percent of the energy gasoline contains. Also, ethanol has a tendency to absorb water, causing a phase separation in fuel tanks that can prove disastrous. Isobutanol does not have the same affinity to water, making separation much less likely.

In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Energy's Vehicle Technologies Office, the National Marine Manufacturers Association, Argonne National Laboratory and BRP Evinrude, Wasil will spend the summer and fall further testing isobutanol. He indicated E0, E10 and B16 (isobutanol) fuels will be tested in a variety of engines on the water. The study will be the first extensive testing by the marine industry since isobutanol was first identified as an alternative fuel in a 2011 study completed by the NMMA with support from Volvo Penta and BRP.

Coast Guard Hearing set for Sinking of USS EL FARO: As reported by MARITIME COMMONS, the U.S. Coast Guard will conduct a public Marine Board of Investigation hearing into the loss of the United States-flagged steam ship EL FARO, and its 33 crewmembers. The first hearing session will focus on the pre-accident historical events relating to the loss, the regulatory compliance record of the EL FARO, crewmember duties and qualifications, past operations of the vessel and the Coast Guard's Search and Rescue operations. During a later hearing session (date to be determined) the accident voyage, including cargo loading, weather conditions and navigation will be examined in detail. The National Transportation Safety Board, which conducted its own investigation, will fully participate in the Marine Board of Investigation hearings.

What: Marine Casualty Board of Investigation

When: Daily 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. ET Tuesday, February 16th – Friday, February 26th (excluding 21 Feb.)

Where: Prime F. Osborn Convention Center, 1000 Water Street, Jacksonville, FL 32204 -

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