



Lead Industries Association, Inc.

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Environmental Health Department

February 19, 1982

TO: Official Members
LIA Environmental Health Committee

FROM: Rosalind Volpe - Research Associate, Environmental Health

SUBJECT: Lead in Gasoline

On February 18, 1982, the Environmental Protection Agency stated that it would consider relaxing or repealing its rule that large oil refiners limit the amount of lead they add to gasoline. Comments on the rescission or several possible modifications of the standard will be received for 60 days, and public hearings are scheduled for March 23 and March 24. The agency also proposed to suspend indefinitely the October 1, 1982 deadline by which small refiners now subject to less rigorous lead standards would have to meet the half-gram limit. A 30-day comment period was specified for this proposal. The Lead Industries Association will be actively participating during these comment periods.

Sincerely,

Rosalind Volpe
Research Associate,
Environmental Health

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Enclosure

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U.S. May Repeal Rules Limiting Lead in Gasoline

By ROBERT D. HERSHEY Jr.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18 — The Environmental Protection Agency said today that it would consider relaxing or repealing its rule that large oil refiners limit the amount of lead they add to gasoline on the ground that the pollution-control measure was becoming outmoded.

Lead improves the performance of gasoline in an engine, but because it is a

dangerous pollutant, the Government has required that big refiners limit the amount of lead that may be added to each gallon to one-half gram.

The agency acted in response to a request last year by the Vice President's Task Force on Regulatory Reform that it reconsider its rules in light of the sharp rise in the use of unleaded fuel.

Since 1973, all new automobiles have been required to have catalytic converters to reduce pollution. Unleaded gasoline, which must be used in cars that

have catalytic converters because they are easily fouled by lead, now accounts for 52 percent of gasoline consumption.

Hearings Scheduled in March

"Within four to six years, even if there were no standard for lead in gasoline, the growth in unleaded gasoline usage would result in total usage of lead antiknock additives equal to the level of usage under current regulatory controls," the environmental agency said.

Comments on the rescission or several possible modifications of the standard will be received for 60 days, and public hearings are scheduled for March 23 and March 24.

Environmental groups responded angrily to the agency initiative.

"If the Reagan Administration has its way, an old environmental hazard that caused brain damage, retardation and learning disabilities in young children will reappear," said Clarence M. Dittlow 3d, director of the Center for Auto Safety. "Raising the present limits on lead in gasoline will not only prevent many of these children from getting below the danger level, but will cause lead poisoning among children to rise toward the common problem it was in the 1960's."

Eric Goldstein of the Natural Resources Defense Council said, "The Administration is playing Russian roulette with the public health of American children."

Awaiting Public Comment

Spokesmen for the environmental agency stressed that the review of its half-gram standard, which was established under the Clean Air Act of 1970, did not yet constitute an actual proposal, which will not be made until after public comment has been received.

However, the agency did propose today to suspend indefinitely the Oct. 1 deadline by which small refiners now subject to less rigorous lead standards

would have to meet the half-gram limit. Small refiners are defined essentially as those refining 50,000 barrels a day or less, a group that supplies from 5 percent to 7 percent of the nation's gasoline.

The permissible lead range for small refiners is from eight-tenths of a gram per gallon to 2.63 grams, depending on the amount of gasoline each produces.

A 30-day comment period was specified for this proposal.

Use of 2 Chemicals Allowed

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16 (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency, reversing an earlier recommendation, announced Wednesday that it would take no action to either ban or limit two widely used chemicals, formaldehyde and diethylhexyl phthalate, or DEHP.

Formaldehyde is used in a variety of products, ranging from plywood to toothpaste. DEHP is used in hundreds of plastic products including toys, infant plastic plants and milking machines.

Evidence was presented to the environmental agency in the fall of 1980 that both chemicals caused cancer in laboratory animals. Under the law, the agency is required to review such evidence for chemicals it licenses to determine whether the risks are so great that the chemical should not be produced or should be restricted to certain uses.

Last April, the agency's staff presented a draft document that would have begun such a review for both chemicals. However, after Anne M. Gorsuch ordered a further study after she became head of the agency in May.

In a memorandum prepared earlier this month Dr. John A. Todhunter, the agency's assistant administrator for toxic substances, called the earlier drafts "incomplete and flawed" and said the agency would not be justified in beginning any enforcement action.

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