NOZZLE & WRENCH

WMDACAR

VOLUME 25 / ISSUE 3
MARCH 2026

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON DC, MARYLAND & DELAWARE SERVICE STATION & AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR ASSOCIATION

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Vote could take place from day of hearing until session is over, do not procrastinate your email could be the one that keeps this off ballot.

KIRK'S CORNER

March Legislative Update

By Kirk McCauley, Director Of Member Relations & Government Affairs

Action Alert – Minimum Wage SB886 – Constitutional Amendment bill will be heard on March 11th

SB0886 is a minimum wage bill that would go on to November ballot as a Constitutional Amendment. SB886 would increase minimum wage every year until 2030 when it reaches $25 an hour or by 2032 for businesses with 14 or fewer employees. While it's too late to register for hearing, you can send emails to committee members before they vote. **Vote could take place from day of hearing until session is over, do not procrastinate your email could be the one that keeps this off ballot.** Who doesn't want more money and if this gets on ballot its case closed – approved.

My testimony is embedded in this article; bullet points are in my testimony. Use your own words on what $25 minimum wage would do to your business, speak from the heart -No body know your business better than you do, speak up. Read the bill and send an email to Finance Committee Fiscal and Policy Note

Hearing is in Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday the 11th, hearing starts at 1pm. I will have a better feeling on chances after this hearing.

Any Questions, call Kirk or text 301-775-0221.

Contact Committee Members: and Ask for a - NO VOTE - on SB886, Send one email, coping all on committee.

Senator Pam Beidle (Chair)
Senator Antonio Hayes (Vice Chair *and bill sponsor*)
Senator Arthur Ellis
Senator Dawn Gile
Senator Steve Hershey
Senator Carl Jackson
Senator Ben Kramer
Senator Clarence Lam
Senator Johnny Mautz
Senator Justin Ready
Senator Alonzo Washington

This is a type of bill we normally don't see, a bill to put constitutional amendment on November Ballot on Minimum Wage. Here is a link to legislative process and will explain a which includes a constitutional amendment process.
Maryland General Assembly - Legislative Process

Continues on page 4

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Continued from cover page

Members of the Maryland General Assembly are rushing to meet a legislative deadline on March 23, which is known as Crossover Day in Annapolis. In short, the crossover deadline is the General Assembly's way of moving things along toward passage. Bills need to pass both the House and the Senate to become law – so during the 90-day session, a bill needs to be "on its way" to the opposite chamber with enough time to beconsidered by the opposite chamber and, if necessary, the two chambers sort out their differences or bill fails.

Bills not clearing their chamber of origin by March 23, will be assigned to the "Rules Committee" in the second chamber. That means an additional procedural step, to get the bill re-assigned from that Committee to its proper committee. Last day or "Sine Die" is April 13 th , that leaves19 working days after cross over, this alone is frequently enough to prevent a bill from moving to finale stage if not crossed over in time.

We do have a King and a Queen in Maryland that dictate whether a bill moves no matter the date, House Speaker Joseline A. Pena- Melnyk and Senate President Bill Ferguson and if they say moves it - it moves. They do their best to be impartial but that is very difficult to do. When bills cross over, a lot of the time the hearing in opposite chamber is sponsor testimony only but that again does not stop you from sending in written to Committee Members in second chamber, Simple, Quick and Effective. Any Questions call me.

Members of the Maryland General Assembly are rushing to meet a legislative deadline on March 23, which is known as Crossover Day in Annapolis.

Chair: Pamela Beidle and members of Senate Finance

RE: SB886 Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment - Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage

Position: Unfavorable

My name is Kirk McCauley, my employer is WMDA/CAR, we represent service stations, convenience stores, and repair facilities across the state as a non-profit trade group established in 1937.

SB886 put on ballot as a Constitutional Amendment would mean this legislative body is not doing their sworn job. If someone asked you if you want to make more money and do nothing more than you are doing now, I do not think you would turn that offer down. This does not belong on the November Ballot as a Constitutional Amendment. This is the definition of an anti-small business bill, although it will affect all business as "Rising Tide Floats all Boats" or in formal terns "Wage Compression." A true business Killer.

Consumers, workers, small businesses, and the State of Maryland would be the ultimate losers.

- Some residents will become unemployable, those that do not speak English but learning on the job, entry level jobs that teach and prep for the next step up.
- These jobs would disappear because of businesses closing or changing over to A.I based businesses. A.I. has the ability now to do most jobs and consumers will choose to shop at these locations, seeking prices, without employees. We only must look at the big box discount retailer to see the model.
- Prices of consumer goods, fast food, sit-down dining costs would skyrocket for surviving business location. Maryland is not an island, and the roads to DE and VA will fill with shoppers looking for better prices or shopping for a better place to live. This is happening now and would only increase as all consumer goods increase in price.
- The state of Maryland would see tremendous cost increases, for instance, the University of Maryland College Park Campus alone estimates that wage payments increase by $58.8 million once fully phased in. SB886 would bring increase in Unemployment Claims, as businesses fold move to business-friendly states, or lay off workers as they going to A.I.
- Small business has has seen major cost increase in recent years, Family and Sick Leave will begin collecting in 2027, Maryland Lottery revenue was reduced, Minimum wage was increased to $15,00, payroll taxes, license fees, and electricity has become a major expense. State and Federal taxes payroll taxes would increase again, adding significantly to cost should this bill pass.

We only must look at California $20-hour minimum wage law and the consequences, this article in National Law Review shows how it has affected consumers, businesses, and the loss of jobs. https://californiaglobe.com/fr/californias-20-fast-food-minimum-wage-job-losses-higher-food-prices-increased-automation/?utm_campaign=Daily%20Headlines&utm_medium=email&_hs

SB886 is what you call a dumpster fire and an anti-consumer and small business bill. SB886 at $25 an hour would be the biggest A.I booster, the biggest job and business loss ever and a disaster for Maryland employment and State finances.

WMDA/CAR asks for an unfavorable report on SB886.

Kirk McCauley, 301-775-0221 or
kmccauley@wmdacar.com

HB1429 Right to repair bill will be heard on the 10th, while it's too late to sign up, emails can still be effective Bill will be heard on March 10th

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Chair: Kriselda Valderama and member of Economics Matters Committee

RE: HB1429 Consumer Protection - Right to Repair - Motor Vehicles and Farm Equipment

Position: Favorable

My name is Kirk McCauley, my employer is WMDA/CAR, we represent service stations, convenience stores, and repair facilities across the state as a non-profit trade group established in 1937.

Independent repair facilities are our neighbors, community supporters, and a place to repair or service your vehicle close to home. Their ability to do so depends on their neighborhood repair facility being able to access vehicle information from manufacturers at a fair cost. Manufacturers are installing wireless communication devices that will send information back to location of manufactures choice, called Telematics. Repair information and Telematics are addressed in HB1429, along with farm equipment.

- HB1429 requires manufacturers to allow owners and independent repair facilities to buy repair information on a daily, monthly, or yearly subscription basis, at a fair price.
- Allowing owner of a new vehicle to send information (Telematics) to location of their choice, they did pay for it. Telematics data includes information critical to maintenance and repair of vehicle, safety, and convenience features.
- Consumers along with their trusted local repair facility (that might be a (Manufacturers Dealer) will benefit. Consumer benefits from driving a shorter distance for repair or maintenance, peace of mind knowing local location is part of community. Communities have started using the saying "Buy Local" from groceries to car repair.
- Right to repair bill passed in Massachusetts in 2012 and telematics was added in 2020, both by a wide margin. A federal court cleared the last part of a law suite brought by trade group representing manufacturers in February of 2025 – Right to Repair- Session Law - Acts of 2012 Chapter 368 - Telematics - Motor Vehicle Telematics System Notice Requirement | Mass.gov
- HB1429 helps all owners of all vehicles that need repair and maintenance, not just from independent repair facility. Consumers that like a dealership to work on their investment will benefit from a level playing field this bill creates, competition with everybody having the same tools in their box. Competition will encourage fair pricing.
- The environment will benefit by less miles driven to get to your favorite neighborhood repair facility, small savings but it all adds up. Our opponents will say information is already out there, in that case this bill will not hurt them at all, no one is asking for something free, just asking to be fair and manufacture can recover any cost to comply. It's time to help your neighbors and all consumers by passing HB1429.

WMDA/CAR asks for favorable vote on HB1429.

Kirk McCauley, 301-775-0221 or kmccauley@wmdacar.com

Delegate Kris Valderrama (Chair) Economic matters committee can be emailed and can be effective, tell you story, nobody can tell it better.
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Delegate Adrian Boafo
Delegate Brian Crosby
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Delegate Seth Howard
Delegate Andre Johnson
Delegate Jesse Pippy
Delegate Andrew Pruski
Delegate Lily Qi

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Delegate Pam Queen
Delegate Denise Roberts
Delegate Mike Rogers
Delegate April Rose
Delegate Veronica Turner
Delegate William Wivell

SB0708 State Lottery - Courier Services – Licensure bill will be heard on March 11th To late to sign up, emails can be effective

---

Chair: Guy Guzzone and Members of Budget and Taxation Committee

RE:SB 708 State Lottery - Courier Services - Licensure

Position: Unfavorable

My name is Kirk McCauley, my employer is WMDA/CAR, we represent service stations, convenience stores, and repair facilities across the state as a non-profit trade group established in 1937.

- A Courie service is basicly online lottery, the potential to harm 4400 small business licensed lottery agents currently in Maryland who sold lottery 2025, returning $667.2 million net profit to Maryland.
- There is nothing in this bill that would prevent couriers from becoming agents and setting up a retail business with dozens of terminals. Texas suspended lottery courier service after a location in state operated by lottery courier was involved in incident with big lottery wins.
- Couriers normally charge a percentage of what is deposited in customers' accounts for their services. Customers pay more than if they bought in store and they can also impulse buy by picking up their phone. Retailers not only do not get lottery sales but also ancillary purchases while in store, along with sales tax on those sales.
- Maryland agents have had selling fees and cashing fees cut in recent years. Giving our business to out of state courier services does not make any sense.

WMDA/CAR asks for an unfavorable vote on SB708.

Any questions, contact to Kirk McCauley, 301-775-0221 or kmccauley@wmdacar.com
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LEGISLATIVE LUNCH & BRIEFING

Join MAPDA and WMDA members on Wednesday, March 18th for lunch and a briefing on the policy issues facing the industry.

Attendees will hear from EMA President Rob Underwood about the latest in Washington.

We look forward to seeing you!

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Injunctive Relief Granted to Gas Station Owner in Puerto Rico Based Upon PMPA Claim

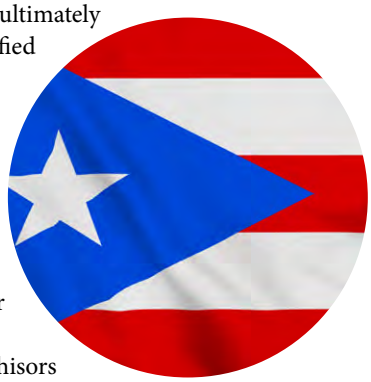
Brought to you by Lynott, Lynott & Parsons, P.A.

Under the PMPA, a franchisee can obtain emergency injunctive relief more easily than in a standard federal case when the termination of a fuel franchise is in dispute.

A federal court in Puerto Rico recently granted a gas station owner's request for a temporary restraining order to block the termination or non-renewal of its franchise agreement with its fuel supplier. The case is *Isla Verde Service Station, Inc. v. Puerto Rico Energy, LLC*, 2025 WL 3539149 (U.S. District Court, D. Puerto Rico, December 10, 2025).

In that case, Isla Verde Service Station, Inc. ("Isla Verde"), entered into a franchise agreement with Puerto Rico Energy, LLC ("PRE"). Under the franchise agreement, PRE leased the station property (as landlord) and supplied branded gasoline to Isla Verde. Shortly before the expiration of the franchise agreement, PRE informed Isla Verde that it intended to move to a "dealer-owned, dealer operated" business model, which would require Isla Verde to purchase the real property from PRE, and continue to purchase gasoline from PRE.

The parties then negotiated over the sale of the property, and ultimately were unable to reach an agreement on the price. PRE then notified Isla Verde that it would terminate or non-renew the franchise agreement upon the scheduled expiration date. Isla Verde sued PRE, and sought injunctive relief under the Petroleum Marketing Practices Act, 15. U.S.C. §2801, *et seq*. ("PMPA") to block the termination/non-renewal of the franchise.



In its written opinion, the court described the purpose of PMPA as setting minimum standards for the termination and nonrenewal of franchise relationships involving the sale of motor fuel by franchisors. The court noted that Congress, recognizing the disparity of bargaining power between franchisees and franchisors in the petroleum industry, enacted the PMPA to prevent franchisors from terminating or non-renewing franchises for technical or minor contract violations. However, the PMPA's protections are subject to numerous exceptions, and termination or non-renewal by the franchisor is permissible where it is based upon one of the specific statutory grounds stated in the PMPA. The PMPA also provides that, even where grounds for a non-renewal exist, under certain circumstances a franchisor must (1) make "a bona fide offer to sell, transfer or assign" its interest in the premises to the franchisee, and (2) offer the franchisee a right of first refusal of at least 45 days duration before exercising its non-renewal rights. PMPA § 2802(b)(3(D)(iii).

Isla Verde had sought an emergency order (or injunction) under the PMPA to block the termination or non-renewal of its franchise. The court pointed out that under the PMPA, a franchisee can obtain a preliminary injunction more easily than a person seeking a preliminary injunction in a standard case under federal rule of civil procedure. Ordinarily, a person seeking a preliminary injunction has to establish

"immediate and irreparable injury, loss or damage" in the absence of emergency relief. In contrast, under the PMPA, a district court "shall" grant emergency injunctive relief if (1) the franchisee plaintiff shows that "there exist sufficiently serious questions going to the merits to make such questions a fair ground for litigation[,]" and (2) "the court determines that, on balance, the hardships imposed upon the franchisor by the issuance of such preliminary injunctive relief will be less than the hardship which would be imposed upon such franchisee if such preliminary injunctive relief were not granted." PMPA § 2805(b)(2).

The court found that Isla Verde had raised "sufficiently serious questions going to the merits" of its PMPA claims as to whether the franchisor's offers were made in good faith, in the ordinary course, and satisfied the statutory requirements. In balancing the hardships, the court determined that *without* the TRO, Isla Verde would suffer greater hardship (including potentially losing its long-held business and goodwill) than Puerto Rico Energy would if the TRO were in place, given the franchisor's larger scale and continued ability to operate while the case proceeds. Accordingly, the court granted Isla Verde's motion for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO), which temporarily prevented Puerto Rico Energy from (i) terminating or refusing to renew the existing franchise relationship; and (ii) selling or transferring its interest in the Isla Verde Service Station premises.

While the ultimate outcome of the case remains to be seen, the case illustrates the helpful protections that the PMPA can offer to prevent a franchisor from terminating or selling the franchise while a legal dispute unfolds. ■

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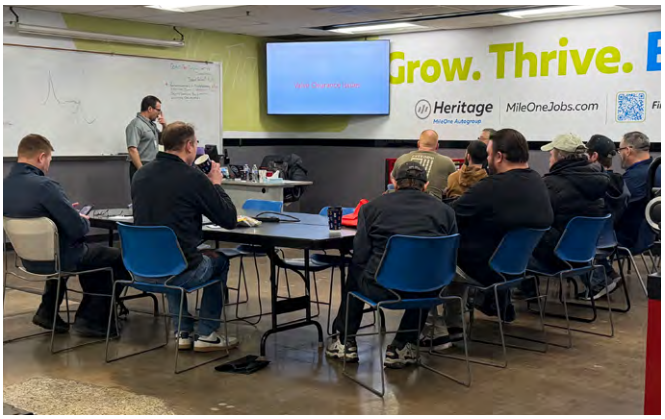


Petroleum & Refined Products

Article contributed by Shipley Energy Commercial Solutions Team

With the Strait of Hormuz closed and 20% of the world's crude supply disrupted, global fuel markets are under extraordinary pressure.

Due to the recent operations in Iran, liquid fuels markets have hit **session highs not seen since the peak of the Russia Ukraine war.** These our astounding price moves, not just because of the outright values, but due to the speed of which these prices were achieved. Last week crude and refined products NYMEX contracts had their highest weekly percentage gain on record, dating back to the early 1980s. March 9, 2026 saw further extreme volatile prices moves with Crude hitting an overnight high of 119.48, HO diesel 4.4715, RBOB gasoline 3.2205. Futures prices have more than doubled in 60 days driven by extreme cold weather of last month and closing of the Strait of Hormuz which 20% of the world crude oil traverses daily. It is still early to call a peak top in crude prices but the recent price action technicals point towards an interim top complimented by a significant reversal of intraday highs. At time of writing APR HO is at 3.65, 82cpg below the overnight highs!

In 2022 HO saw few very large reversals off peak highs, most notably -$1.46 April 2022 and -$1.30 reversal on March 9, 2022 – 4 years to the day. These were considered massive moves in the history of context. All signs are pointing to much higher retail prices at the pump, potentially $5-5.50 diesel and $4.00 regular gasoline. The longer the Strait of Hormuz is closed, the further exponential damage will be done to the availability of global supply of crude and refined products.

The G7 countries are considering a joint release of oil from reserves, potentially as much as 400 million barrels. UK finance minister Reeves is also exploring further action on distillates.

Details include:

- The release would be potentially coordinated by the International Energy Agency.
- Three G7 countries, including the US, have so far expressed support for the idea.
- US officials believe a joint release in the range of 300m-400m barrels is appropriate.
- G7 countries currently hold 1.2 billion barrels of oil in the reserve.

The G7's proposed release of 400 million barrels from strategic reserves is framed as a major but temporary "political painkiller" for the oil market shock caused by the conflict, not a cure addressing root causes.

- Global oil consumption runs ~103 million barrels per day; the conflict has disrupted an estimated 4–6 million barrels/day (from suspended Iranian exports, Iraqi production collapsing from 4.3 to 1.3 million bpd, Kuwait force majeure, Saudi diversions, and effective Strait of Hormuz closure).
- At that disruption scale, the 400 million barrels would cover roughly **67–100 days** (about 2–3 months) of the supply gap — a buffer the market quickly priced

in, which is why oil prices fell from +30% to +12% intraday despite the announcement.

- The market's reaction (still holding +12% even with the largest reserve intervention in history announced) signals that traders do not expect a near-term resolution to restore full supply flows.
- **Historical comparison:** The 2022 Biden SPR release of 180 million barrels (phased over months) delivered only modest consumer relief (~18 cents/gallon) during a smaller, more contained Ukraine-related shock with a clearer end path. This current disruption is deemed structurally larger and more intractable.
- Sustainable return to pre-conflict oil prices requires reopening the Strait of Hormuz, restoring Iraqi output, and normalizing Gulf shipping insurance — none of which reserve draws can achieve. Recent events (e.g., installation of a new Supreme Leader amid public assassination threats from U.S. and Israeli officials) make de-escalation even harder.

We are taking cues from the 2022 playbook when prices have gone to extremes. We are pairing risk down as both bullish and bearish headline news is pushing energy markets to extremes which we noted above on. Energy markets are very familiar with extreme prices moves in early March. To the contrary, on March 8, 2020 crude oil opened down -35% due to a production agreement with OPEC and Russia, with OPEC increasing production sending prices spiraling on their way to infamous negative -$40 per bbl all time low in April 2020 due to Covid. In summary we are advising customers to keep their sales cycle short, buy what you need and price their customers on what they buy and sell through it before the next load or contract to mitigate risks. ■

When Less Isn't More: The Value of Fair Partnerships

Brought to you by Tim Jancius, Spigler Petroleum Equipment, LLC

By Tim Jancius

In business, we often hear the phrase "less is more." Spend less. Negotiate harder. Push for a better price. But sometimes, in the pursuit of saving a few dollars, businesses lose sight of something far more valuable: **strong relationships.**

Across many industries—not just fuel retail—companies have become incredibly skilled at negotiation. Contracts are scrutinized. Vendors are compared line by line. Prices are pushed lower and lower.

On the surface, this seems like good business practice.

But there is a point where aggressive cost-cutting stops creating value and starts creating unintended consequences.

In the pursuit of saving a few dollars, businesses can lose sight of something far more valuable: strong relationships.

The Race to the Bottom

When every contract becomes a contest to secure the lowest possible price, the relationship between customer and contractor can quickly become transactional rather than collaborative.

Instead of building long-term partnerships, businesses can find themselves constantly:

- renegotiating contracts
- switching vendors
- comparing quotes
- managing service inconsistencies

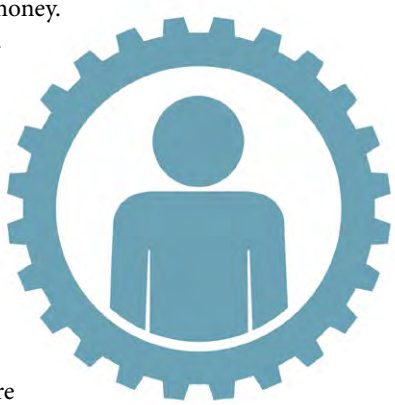
The focus shifts from **performance and reliability** to **price alone.**

And while saving a few dollars on paper may feel like a win, the long-term costs can add up in other ways.

Understanding the True Cost of Service

For contractors and service providers, time is quite literally money.

Every service call involves more than the work performed onsite. It includes travel time, preparation, documentation, reporting, training, insurance, tools, and the skilled technicians who make the work possible.



When pricing pressure becomes extreme, contractors are forced to make difficult choices:

- reduce time spent on site
- limit availability
- delay non-urgent issues
- cut investment in training or staffing

None of these outcomes benefit the customer.

In fact, they often create the very problems businesses were trying to avoid—delays, missed issues, or inconsistent service.

The Power of the Right Fit

The most successful businesses tend to approach vendor relationships differently.

Instead of focusing exclusively on the lowest price, they focus on **finding the right fit.**

They look for partners who:

- understand their operation
- respond quickly when issues arise
- communicate clearly
- take pride in their work

When both sides respect each other's time, expertise, and business realities, something important happens.

The relationship shifts from transactional to collaborative.

Contractors become invested in their customers' success. Customers gain dependable support from people who understand their systems and priorities.

Building Stronger Business Relationships

Fair partnerships benefit everyone involved.

Customers receive consistent, high-quality service from technicians who know their sites and systems. Contractors gain the stability needed to invest in training, staffing, and better support.

That stability often translates into better responsiveness, stronger accountability, and fewer surprises.

In many cases, businesses discover that paying a fair and reasonable rate ultimately saves money by preventing costly problems before they occur.

Looking Beyond the Price Tag

Every business must manage costs. That will never change.

But the most successful operators understand that **value and price are not always the same thing.**

A dependable partner who answers the phone, shows up prepared, and stands behind their work can be worth far more than the lowest bid on a spreadsheet.

Because in the end, businesses don't succeed or fail based solely on transactions.

They succeed because of the relationships behind them.

And when those relationships are built on fairness, respect, and trust, everyone involved has a better chance to grow. ■

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SSDA-AT Strengthens Federal Advocacy on Right-to-Repair and Tax Policy Priorities

The REPAIR Act continues to gain bipartisan momentum as lawmakers address access to vehicle repair data.

By Roy Littlefield IV

SSDA-AT has continued to expand its federal advocacy efforts, maintaining an active presence on Capitol Hill in support of the REPAIR Act and other key policy issues affecting service stations and independent automotive repair shops. As Congress continues to consider major legislative priorities, SSDA-AT remains focused on ensuring that the interests of service stations, independent automotive repair shops, family-owned businesses, and pass-through entities are clearly represented in ongoing discussions.

A central focus of these efforts is the bipartisan Right to Equitable and Professional Auto Industry Repair (REPAIR) Act. The House version of the legislation, H.R. 1566, has secured 46 bipartisan cosponsors and recently advanced out of subcommittee to the full House Energy and Commerce Committee, marking an important procedural step in the legislative process. In the Senate, the companion bill, S. 1379, has attracted eight bipartisan cosponsors, reflecting growing support across party lines for right-to-repair principles and expanded access to vehicle repair and diagnostic information.

The REPAIR Act seeks to address concerns raised by service stations and independent automotive repair shops regarding access to the tools, software, and technical information necessary to service increasingly complex vehicles. Supporters argue that consistent access to repair data promotes competition, provides consumers with more choices, and helps sustain local service stations and independent automotive repair shops that operate in communities across the country. As vehicles incorporate more advanced technology, the issue of repair access has taken on greater significance for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and the small businesses that rely on fair and timely access to manufacturer information.

In addition to advocating for the REPAIR Act, SSDA-AT recently participated in a meeting of the Family Business Coalition, where discussions focused on the evolving federal tax and reconciliation landscape. The meeting brought together coalition members and policy experts to examine current negotiations in Congress and the potential implications for family-owned service stations and

independent automotive repair shops.

Participants received detailed briefings from representatives connected to House and Senate leadership offices, along with officials from the United States Department of the Treasury. Presentations outlined the outlook for federal tax policy, estate tax considerations, and the broader reconciliation strategy shaping legislative negotiations. Speakers emphasized the importance of providing stability and predictability for family-owned service stations and independent automotive repair shops as lawmakers debate budget priorities and long-term tax frameworks.

Particular attention was given to how proposed tax changes could affect multi-generational businesses, including service stations and independent automotive repair shops structured as pass-through entities. Coalition members discussed strategies to ensure that the perspectives of these small and independent businesses are incorporated into ongoing policy deliberations. The meeting concluded with clearly defined action steps aimed at strengthening coordinated advocacy efforts and maintaining consistent engagement with federal lawmakers.

Through its continued involvement on both the REPAIR Act and federal tax policy discussions, SSDA-AT remains committed to advancing balanced, bipartisan solutions that support service stations and independent automotive repair shops. By engaging with lawmakers, coalition partners, and federal agencies, the association is working to promote policies that foster competition, protect family-owned enterprises, and strengthen the broader automotive service industry for the long term. ■

EDITORIAL

SDA-AT Advocates for Practical Regulatory Reform While Protecting Core Safeguards

The goal is not to roll back critical safety or environmental protections, but to ensure regulations are practical and workable for small businesses.

By Roy Littlefield III

SSDA-AT is working aggressively at the federal level to reduce regulatory burdens and roll back unnecessary red tape that has been hampering service stations and independent automotive repair shops across the country. As the regulatory landscape continues to evolve, the association is focused on promoting a balanced approach—one that protects essential safety and environmental standards while ensuring that rules are practical, efficient, and workable for small businesses.

In recent years, Republicans have significantly increased their use of the Congressional Review Act (CRA) since Donald Trump took office, overturning more regulations than under any previous administration. The CRA allows Congress to review and, by majority vote, nullify certain federal agency rules within a specified timeframe. Its expanded use has become a notable feature of federal regulatory policy debates.

More recently, congressional Republicans have applied the CRA to a broader range of actions, including measures not traditionally considered formal rules, targeting regulations related to mining, drilling, and environmental oversight. At the same time, Democrats have raised concerns about the potential long-term implications of using the CRA in this manner, particularly regarding regulatory stability and the balance of authority between Congress and federal agencies.

Against this backdrop, SSDA-AT has been actively engaging lawmakers to ensure that the perspectives of service stations and independent automotive repair shops are part of the conversation. The association's position is clear: the goal is not to roll back critical safety or environmental protections. Those safeguards

are important to public health, consumer confidence, and the long-term strength of the automotive service industry.

Instead, SSDA-AT is advocating for regulations that make more sense for small, community-based businesses. This includes rules that are easier to understand and comply with, permitting processes that move more efficiently, and the elimination of duplicative or overlapping requirements that increase administrative costs without delivering measurable improvements in safety or environmental outcomes.

For service stations and independent automotive repair shops, regulatory complexity often translates into higher compliance costs, delays in business operations, and increased legal and administrative expenses. Smaller operators, in particular, can struggle to navigate layers of federal, state, and local requirements that may be inconsistently applied or subject to frequent changes. Over time, these challenges can affect investment decisions, hiring, and the ability to compete with larger entities that have more extensive compliance resources.

SSDA-AT is therefore working with policymakers to identify specific areas where streamlining could improve efficiency without weakening substantive protections. This includes examining timelines for permit approvals, clarifying guidance from federal agencies, and encouraging coordination among regulators to reduce conflicting directives. The objective is to create a regulatory framework that upholds environmental and safety standards while also recognizing the operational realities of service stations and independent automotive repair shops.

As federal regulatory debates continue, SSDA-AT remains committed to constructive engagement with lawmakers from both parties. By advocating for thoughtful reform rather than broad deregulation, the association seeks to ensure that small businesses in the automotive service sector can continue to serve their communities effectively, invest in their operations, and comply with clear, reasonable rules.

Through sustained advocacy and direct dialogue with Congress and federal agencies, SSDA-AT will continue pressing for practical reforms that reduce unnecessary red tape, protect essential safeguards, and support a stable, predictable regulatory environment for service stations and independent automotive repair shops nationwide. ■

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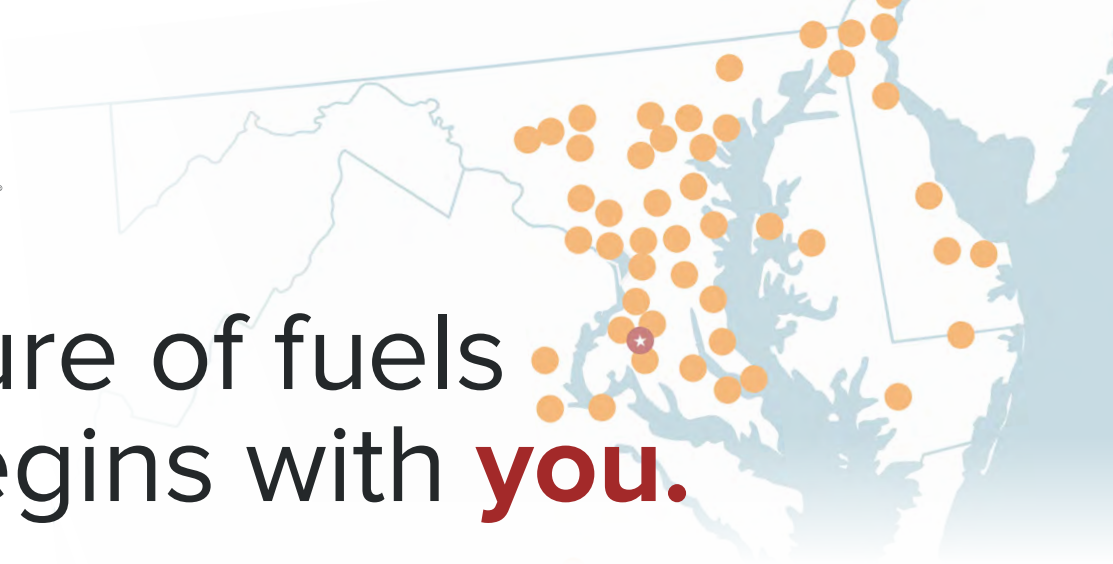

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