NOZZLE & WRENCH

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

No hard data from any sources we could find as to effectiveness of hoses in controlling Green House Gases…

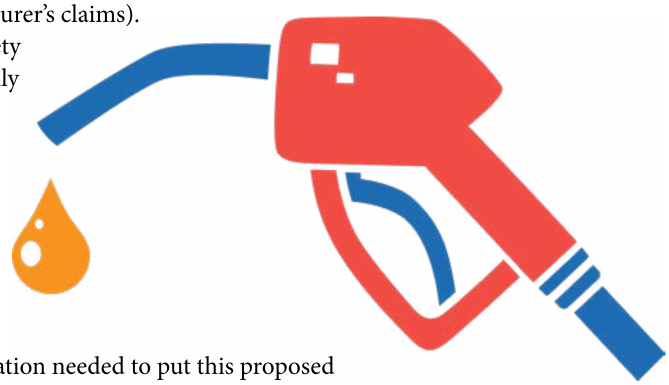
KIRK'S CORNER

Proposed Regulations Update: Eco Nozzles & Low-Permeation Hoses

By Kirk McCauley, Director Of Member Relations & Government Affairs

WMDA and MAPDA had a meeting with Assistant Secretary of Maryland Department of Environment, Zach Schafer. We went over costs to implement regulations and the continuing cost of replacements that would never end.

- Claim is new hoses and nozzles would last 4-5 years before replacement necessary. Funny they only have a 1-year warranty.
- No hard data from any sources we could find as to effectiveness of hoses in controlling Green House Gases (only manufacturer's claims).
- Health and safety concerns with customers having to manually depress nozzle with hand while bending over filling containers, motorcycles, equipment and 2015 to 2019 dodge trucks who are not compatible with these ECO nozzles.
- The cost of nozzles and hoses would raise gas prices and place an added burden on consumers and businesses.



Thanks to everyone for sending information needed to put this proposed regulation on the back burner for now. Assistant Secretary Schafer told us that the proposed regulation is on hold and under review. This is a good sign, but we must stay on top of the issue because after the elections this could very well be back in the spotlight.

Tire Fees, Q&A WMDA/CAR had with Comptroller's Legal Department

Maryland passed a new tire recycling fee ($1.00) and a new tire fee $5.00 that took effect January 1, 2026, and was explained in technical Bulletin 61 from comptroller's

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NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

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Anyone who makes a "first sale" of a new tire in Maryland is the person responsible for paying the Tire Recycling Fee ($1.00) and the New Tire Fee ($5.00) so they must register.

Continued from cover page

office. After many inquiries from members, WMDA/CAR put together a Q&A email to legal division with questions that had come up. **The following is from Legal Division of Comptroller's Office:**

This is in response to your email dated June 8, 2026, regarding the following questions/requests about tire fees and Technical Bulletin 61, which are numbered for convenience.

1. Yes or no. *Wholesalers are required to list $5.00 new tire fee and $1.00 recycling fee as a line item on invoice to a tire retailer.*

Yes. In your example, this is the "first sale" of the tires because the wholesaler is acting as a tire dealer by selling tires to a person—a tire retailer—who is not a wholesaler or a consumer of a tire on which a recycling fee has not been paid. Therefore, the wholesaler must remit the Tire Recycling Fee ($1.00) and the New Tire Fee ($5.00) to the Comptroller and file a Tire Fee Return.

This continues the previous practice when there was only the Tire Recycling Fee.

2. Yes or no. *If a retail tire retail dealer buys from out of state and no fees are listed as a line item, retailer is responsible for paying $5.00 & $1.00 fee per tire.*

Yes. If a retailer acquires new tires from out-of-state and the only sales that take place in Maryland are sales to retail customers, the Tire Recycling Fee ($1.00) and the New Tire Fee ($5.00) are payable when the retail sales are made in Maryland.

This continues the previous practice when there was only the Tire Recycling Fee.

3. Yes or no. *Anyone who sells tires, manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers must register for a Maryland New Tire Fee account.*

Generally, yes. Anyone who makes a "first sale" of a new tire in Maryland is the person responsible for paying the Tire Recycling Fee ($1.00) and the New Tire Fee ($5.00) so they must register. Similarly, a person who buys tires from out-of-state for resale in Maryland must register as well.

A tire retailer who purchases all of their new tires from Maryland wholesalers does not have to register. This is because the "first sale" of the new tires is from the wholesaler to the tire retailer. The wholesaler who sells them is responsible for paying the Tire Recycling Fee ($1.00) and the New Tire Fee ($5.00) and registering with the Comptroller.

Anyone who sells tires exclusively to wholesalers or out-of-state retailers also does not have to register, as these sales are not subject to the fees.

4. Clarify. *On page 3 of Bulletin # 61(B. #3 – "For a sale made by a tire dealer to a person who resells tires, the tire dealer must separately state the tire recycling fees and new tire fees paid by the tire dealer on the invoice or other document of sale." This goes against first sales of tires that is not a wholesaler. Bulletin 61 has been calling manufactures- tire dealers and now it is saying a tire dealer must separately list recycling and new tire fee on invoice to a person that resells tires, which in most cases is a wholesaler. Confusing!*

This continues the previous practice when there was only the Tire Recycling Fee, which is required to be separately stated when a wholesaler sold a new tire to a tire dealer. The sale of a new tire by a wholesaler to a wholesaler is not a "first sale" so the Tire Recycling Fee ($1.00) and the New Tire Fee ($5.00) do not apply. However, both fees apply if the seller cannot determine if the buyer is a wholesaler and the buyer fails to provide certification.

5. Clarify. *There are 11 items that must be retained for four years. Must it be all 11 or is a purchase invoice and a sales receipt enough to satisfy this requirement? Hard to get permission with communication being what they are.*

This continues previous practice when there was only the Tire Recycling Fee. The Comptroller promulgated a regulation in 1992 requiring that these documents be retained for the Tire Recycling Fee. *See* COMAR 03.08.01.03B. The same regulation is being applied to the New Tire Fee.

The general rule is that the documents that are retained must be relied upon by the person and adequate to distinguish a "first sale" of a new tire in Maryland by a tire dealer from all other sales of new tires in Maryland The facts in your example of a person's reliance on a purchase invoice and a sales receipt aren't sufficient to determine whether the information those documents contain is adequate to distinguish between a "first sale" of a new tire and other sales of new tires.

6. Request. *WMDA/CAR represent small retail dealers that sell tires. I would like to suggest a bulletin be developed with plain language, line item of dos and don'ts and requirements of each type of business listed, Manufacture, Wholesalers, and retail dealers. While larger businesses have professional help in handling new regulations, a lot of retail tire sellers are Mom and Pop businesses.*

Thank you for your suggestion. You and your members may contact CompMdLegal@marylandtaxes.gov with any additional questions or concerns about the tire fees.

Hopefully, these suggestions might stir the pot a little get legal division to ask for help from the businesses that regulations affect, to cut down on confusion.

July 1, 2026, Changes to Enforcement in Maryland

In the 2026 legislative session SB0820-HB1523 passed and was signed by Gov. Moore CH0354_ defined limits on Kratom, Phenibut and a ban on Tianeptine. This applies to tobacco, Vape Products, and bottled supplements. Altering the violations of law with respect to which the Field Enforcement Division of the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission is authorized to issue a citation or charging document; prohibiting a retailer from distributing, selling, exposing for sale, or advertising for sale unauthorized consumable products; **authorizing the Executive Director of the Commission to seize, confiscate, or destroy unauthorized consumable products and certain other products; etc.**

Helpful links on regulations, and I think ATCC will be updating

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Print this notice from computer and hang next to cashier so public can view.

NOTICE – DIRT BIKES

1. **Sale, transfer, or dispensing of motor fuel for delivery into a dirt bike by a service station or any other person is prohibited by the Baltimore City Code, Article 19, § 40.9. Violators may be subject to a civil penalty of $100.**
2. **Dispensing of motor fuel into a dirt bike from a retail pump at a service station is prohibited by Transportation Article, § 21-1128, Annotated Code of Maryland. Violators may be subject to a driver's license suspension of up to 30 days, up to $1,000 fine and 90 days in jail.**
3. **Dirt bikes are motorcycles or similar vehicles not required to be registered with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration. Dirt bikes include motorized minibikes (2 or 3 wheels) and all-terrain vehicles (3 or 4 wheels). Mopeds, motor scooters, and farm tractors are not dirt bikes. Enacted 2010**

Baltimore City Police Department - Dirt Bike Violators 2024

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this site with July 1, change in laws. Check regularly for updates. [Welcome To Maryland Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission | ATCC]

ATCC will face additional pressure to enforce and along with Health department they will be out on the street and into your sales rooms looking for violations. I urge every retailer to read the bills, look at ATCC web site and FDA site for legal products. Let us be responsible retailers and avoid heavy fines and loss of license.

...added pressure from 13 States Attorney Generals asking credit card providers to police who use their services and asking FDA to step up enforcement of ENDS products and illegal Chinese imports.

UPDATE on Enforcement from Payment Card Company's

There is another elephant in the room that makes all of precautions in what you sell not only the right and responsible avenue but self-preservation in light of added pressure from 13 States Attorney Generals asking credit card providers to police who use their services and asking FDA to step up enforcement of ENDS products and illegal Chinese imports. Including disposable brands such as Geek Bar, Raz, Lost Mary, Elf Bar, and similar products—lack FDA authorization and are therefore illegal to market, distribute, or sell in the United States. [Read full letter - HERE.]

In response, Master Card has issued warnings that their mystery shopper will be checking stores for illegal sales and compliance violation with severe penalties and loss of ability to accept Master Card. This warning went to BP and Marathon suppliers, and I am sure more will follow. Credit card providers Visa and the rest will not be far behind.

FDA-approved electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS) products

https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/market-and-distribute-tobacco-product/e-cigarettes-vapes-and-other-electronic-nicotine-delivery-systems-ends-authorized-fda

[FDA's Searchable Tobacco Products Database].

Baltimore Dirt Bike law

Police have started enforcing the law that puts our retailers in a dangerous place. Article in WBAL featuring WMDA board member Mike Goitom who's manager did all the right things and still got a citation. https://www.wbaltv.com/article/dirt-bike-enforcement-crackdown-gas-station-citation-baltimore/71786303

This might be at the top of the list of stupid bills! It has no effect on the bad Actors and only hurts retailers and their employees. To think bikers won't fill out of a container, siphon from a car or cross over to Baltimore County is beyond me. WMDA & MAPDA is asking Police Commissioner and City Attorney for a meeting, and I will keep all updated as information becomes available.

Delaware - Tobacco tax and Lottery

HS 1 for HB 215 - House Substitute No. 1 for House Bill No. 215 differs from House Bill No. 215 as follows: this substitute provides a definition of a premium cigar and modifies the tax rate changes in House Bill 215 by setting the tax rate for other tobacco products at 40% of the wholesale price, maintaining the tax for premium cigars at 30% of the wholesale price, and setting the tax rate for vapor products at 10 cents per fluid milliliter. A definition of "nicotine pouch" is added. As with House Bill 215, House Substitute No.1 increases the cigarette tax rate to $3.60 per pack, increases some license fees, and changes the definition of "tobacco products" to include more items. This substitute bill sets the effective date of the tax rate increases as September 1, 2026, and the effective date of the increased license fees as January 1, 2027. This Act requires a greater than majority vote for passage because § 10 of Article VIII of the Delaware Constitution requires the affirmative vote of three-fifths of the members elected to each house of the General Assembly to increase the effective rate of a tax or fee levied by the state. **Update HS1 did not get a vote in senate when session ended June 3oth.**

HB 335 This bill protects small businesses in Delaware by preserving lottery retailers' role in iLottery. This bill requires iLottery players to purchase prepaid cards at physical stores to enable their online play. In 2012, the General Assembly adopted the Delaware Gaming Competitiveness Act of 2012, HB 333 of the 146th General Assembly, establishing iLottery in Delaware. To support small businesses, the General Assembly included a provision of that law that required online players to purchase prepaid cards in physical retail stores. However, over a decade later, the Delaware Lottery Commissioner launched an iLottery program that does not uphold this protective provision. This bill updates the iLottery program to reflect the original intent of the law. This Act also makes technical changes to conform to the Legislative Drafting Manual.

HB335 is out of committees in house and ready for vote in full house, I'm writing this on June 29, unlikely this bill will make it senate this year but will be ready for next

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PRESENTS

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Mid-Atlantic Fuel, Convenience & Auto Repair Show

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2:00PM – 4:00PM

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From legislation to industry trends, hear what's next for fuel marketers and convenience retailers at the MAFCAS 2026 Industry & Legislative Issues Forum.

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year. Bills in DE have a 2-year life span to pass or fail. This bill could be a model for Maryland, so it is important to all our lottery agents in DE and MD. DE session is over Tuesday June 30. **Update – HB355 did not get a vote – HB355 and HS1 will come back up next year, as Delaware bills have a 2 year life cycle.**

July 1, 2026, Changes

Maryland Motor Fuel Tax

- Gas .4660
- Diesel .4745
- Motor Fuel Tax Rates by Gallon, Effective July 1, 2026
- All Motor Fuel Forms Tax Guidance - Motor Fuel Tax Forms - Taxpayer Services - Use 779 2026 for floor tax and 779RM 2022 for retailers with multiple locations to list gallonage at each site and transfer total to 779. Just streamlines your work but you can fill out Multiple 779 if you choice. I checked with comptrollers' office and it's ok to use 779RM from 2022.

No gas tax increases in DE or DC

Wage Increases

Montgomery County: Montgomery County Maryland

- **Large employees** (51+ employees): $18.00/hour
- **Mid-size employers** (11–50 employees): $16.50/hour
- **Small employees** (10 or fewer employees): $15.95/hour

Howard County Minimum wage: HC Wage Sheet 2022 REV April 5 (DMT Edits).pdf

- **Small employer** (15 or less employees): $16.00

Link to **Maryland Department of Labor posters** will be updated by July 1, 2026. Maryland Minimum Wage and Overtime Law - Employment Standards Service (ESS) - Division of Labor and Industry

DC Minimum Wage 2026 Minimum Wage Poster.pdf

- All Employees $18.40

Call me with Questions you may have, Kirk 301-775-0221. ■

July Energy Market Update

Brought to you by, Shipley Energy Commercial Solutions Team

Petroleum & Refined Products

Key Takeaways:

- Crude shed its entire war premium in June, with WTI falling from near $90 to the low-$70s as the Strait of Hormuz reopened following a U.S.-Iran peace framework.
- The drop marked roughly a 30% quarterly decline for Brent, the steepest quarterly fall since 2020.
- Despite crude's collapse, PADD 1 distillate stayed structurally tight, with East Coast refinery utilization crashing to 76.5% and stocks running well below the 5-year average.
- A fire at Monroe Energy's Trainer, PA refinery, combined with multiple Northeast terminal outages, further squeezed regional diesel and heating oil supply.
- Diesel cracks and cash differentials held firm even as the flat price fell, and this signals a strong opportunity to lock in fall/winter distillate coverage below spring levels.

The Month the War Premium Broke: Crude Sheds ~30% as the Strait of Hormuz Reopens, but Distillate Stays Tight

Crude prices collapsed nearly 30%, but East Coast distillate markets remained structurally tight.

June opened with the 2026 Iran war and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz still setting the tone: Brent near $96-$97 and WTI near $90 to start (June 1: WTI ~$89.69, Brent ~$96.42), a bounce off May's worst month since COVID (WTI -15.7%). Balances were extraordinarily tight: EIA showed a seventh straight weekly crude draw, down 8.0 MMbbl to 433.7 MMbbl (week ended May 29) and about double expectations, with Cushing near 23 MMbbl, and the IEA calling the market "severely undersupplied." The war premium was fully priced in.

Then the geopolitics flipped. Trump called off threatened strikes on Iran (June 12), announced a framework to reopen Hormuz (June 15), and by June 17 an interim U.S.-Iran peace deal was set for signing in Switzerland, with Iranian exports to resume. WTI broke to a three-month low of $80.75 on June 16 and kept falling, down roughly 40% from the wartime peak by mid-month. National retail gasoline slipped below $4/gal for the first time in months (June 18's $3.9987, a 28th straight daily decline).

The unwind accelerated into quarter-end. As tankers resumed Hormuz transit, WTI slid to ~$72-$73 by June 24; on June 25 Brent's prompt spread flipped into contango for the first time since the war (WTI ~$69-$70). By June 30 WTI settled near $70.63 and Brent near $72.93, a ~30% Q2 drop for Brent and the steepest quarterly fall since 2020, as talks reconvened in Doha.

Through all of it, distillate was the standout strength, and the story that matters most for our book. PADD 1 never loosened: early-June East Coast stocks sat ~12 MMbbl (about 11-13%) below the 5-year average, and by late June regional refinery utilization had crashed to 76.5% (from 87.1%) with East Coast distillate down to 21.4 MMbbl. NYH ULSD held a premium to NYMEX even as the screen collapsed (barge/Buckeye +0.75¢ to +6.5¢; Colonial +5.25¢), diesel cracks stayed historically wide, and net distillate exports ran ~1.5 mb/d (+27% YoY): tight supply into firm demand, even as crude fell apart.

The Northeast supply stack did the rest of the work. A fire took down Monroe Energy's 208,000 b/d Trainer, PA refinery late in the month (crude units restarting, FCC/alky offline ~4 weeks), and terminal outages piled up: Baltimore CITGO ULSD unavailable, Buckeye's Laurel/Sinking Spring out of ULSD for about a week and a half, Rochester diesel maxed more than once, and Marcus Hook propane rack outages. Volatility hasn't fully left, either: two vessels were damaged over the final weekend, and the IEA still sees 2026 global supply down 3.9 mb/d on Gulf losses.

WTI retraced the entire war premium, from ~$90 to the high-$60s/low-$70s by quarter-end, with the decisive break at the $80.75 three-month low on June 16. The curve told the same story: WTI's M1-M6 backwardation compressed from ~+$13.60/bbl in early June to +$5.80 by June 17, and the M1-M2 spread eased to a bare +$0.30 by June 30, the war-tightness signal essentially gone. Near term we see WTI rangebound in the high-$60s to low-$70s with a downside bias toward the mid-$60s if the deal holds; the risk is asymmetric: any Hormuz re-escalation can put $5-$10/bbl back in quickly.

Heating oil was the relative winner and the cleanest read on physical tightness. Even as flat price fell, NYMEX HO held steep backwardation (M1-M2 +15.03¢/gal on June 30) and diesel cracks stayed historically wide on a 76.5% PADD 1 run rate. NYH barge/Buckeye ULSD held premiums all month (+0.75¢ to +6.5¢), with Colonial ~+5.25¢ and Linden +5.00¢, diffs firm while the outright fell. We expect prompt strength to persist: low stocks, ~27% YoY export pull, and the Trainer outage keep the front bid; watch the Trainer restart and Sinking Spring resupply for whether Northeast diffs hold or normalize into July.

Price Technicals: RBOB Gasoline

Gasoline softened with crude: NYH RBOB cash eased to ~$2.87-$3.06 by late June and retail broke below $4/gal, but it's not loose. Early-June stocks were thin (211.6 MMbbl, the lowest May reading since 2014) and the RBOB curve stayed backwardated (M1-M2 +14.52¢/gal on June 30). Constructive-but-capped: summer demand and lean stocks provide a floor while the crude overhang limits the ceiling; absent a fresh Hormuz scare, the outright likely tracks WTI sideways-to-lower into July.

Bottom Line

Bottom line: the war premium that defined Q2 has largely deflated. Crude is now supply-led lower as Hormuz reopens, but PADD 1 distillate remains the tight spot, with cracks and cash diffs firm against a falling screen and the Trainer outage keeping the Northeast structurally short. Expect prompt distillate strength to persist; watch the Trainer restart, the Sinking Spring resupply, and any renewed Hormuz disruption.

Action Advice:

Our focus stays on the back end of the HO NYMEX curve; if physical tightness holds, we expect it to "roll up." With flat price reset ~30% off the wartime highs to ~$70 WTI, this is an opportunity to layer in fall/winter distillate coverage well below spring levels. Review your fall/winter needs with your account manager and keep a close eye on the winter strip.

Electricity Market Update

Due to increased demand for summer cooling for heatwaves, electricity prices increased across the PJM region. In Ohio, 12-month electricity prices rose 7.20% from $52.39 to $56.16, while 36-month prices increased 3.36% from $53.57 to $55.37. Pennsylvania experienced stronger upward price movement, with 12-month electricity prices climbing 10.73% from $62.15 to $68.82 and 36-month prices increasing 5.72% from $63.45 to $67.08.

We continue to see market fundamentals that are potentially bullish for energy prices:

- While natural gas storage injection levels are 175 Bcf above the 5-year average, they're 23 Bcf below last year.
- Demand growth forecasts continue to increase, primarily driven by data center construction.
- PJM's Capacity Auction rate cap and floor was extended to cover PJM delivery years 2028/2029 and 2029/2030. The cap remains at $325/MW-Day and the floor at $175.

The wholesale energy markets watch these factors, and changes can push prices up or down on a daily basis. Based on where we stand now, we recommend evaluating these strategies:

- We recommend locking in your energy price for the next 12-24 months. While there's always the potential for prices to move down, we still believe the overall long-term upside price risk is higher.
- Consider a capacity and or transmission passthrough structure. While we now have a capacity rate cap through 5/31/2030, PLC and or NSPL tag changes on an account level can result in changes to a customers fixed rate. Pass through contracts avoid any premium to account for this extra effort/risk.
- Invest in a plan to reduce your peak demand and overall energy consumption, if you haven't already. Lowering your associated PLC and/or NSPL tag could have substantial price benefits for the following year.

Your to-do list through summer:

- Monitor the broader economic conditions as these can influence energy prices.

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Please send your nomination to ssripada@wmdacar.com

WMDA CAR

WMDACAR PRESENTS MAFCAS Mid-Atlantic Fuel, Convenience & Auto Repair Show

Are You Running the Business—or Is the Business Running You?

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

By Tim Jancius

America's 250th birthday was a spectacular milestone. Across the country, communities came together to celebrate two and a half centuries of independence, progress, sacrifice, innovation, and opportunity. It was a moment worthy of recognition—and one we may never see matched in our lifetimes.

And somehow, it is already behind us.

The fireworks have faded, the celebrations have ended, and the Fourth of July has passed. That means something else that may be difficult to believe:

The year is already more than halfway over.

For many independent business owners, the first six months probably did not feel like a carefully planned journey. They may have felt more like a series of problems demanding immediate attention: equipment failures, staffing concerns, rising expenses, inspections, vendor issues, customer demands, and the countless small decisions that fill every day.

...a series of problems demanding immediate attention: equipment failures, staffing concerns, rising expenses, inspections, vendor issues, customer demands, and the countless small decisions that fill every day.

There is nothing unusual about that. Running a business requires responding to what is happening in the moment.

The danger comes when responding becomes the entire strategy.

It is possible to work hard every day, solve one problem after another, and still reach the end of the year without making meaningful progress toward the goals that mattered most.

July provides a natural opportunity to stop and ask a few honest questions.

Are sales moving in the right direction?

Have operating costs changed?

Are older pieces of equipment becoming more expensive to maintain?

Were planned improvements completed, postponed, or forgotten?

Are customers asking for products or services the business is not currently providing?

Is the business preparing for what comes next, or simply reacting to what happened yesterday?

These questions are not meant to create another list of problems. They are meant to restore perspective.

Independent operators spend so much time working inside their businesses that it can become difficult to step back and evaluate the business as a whole. The urgent issue usually wins, even when the important issue may have a greater long-term impact.

A dispenser that stops working demands immediate attention. An outdated maintenance strategy, a declining product category, an inefficient process, or a missed investment opportunity may not create the same urgency, but over time, it may cost far more.

The middle of the year is also a good time to revisit the decisions discussed

during year-end planning.

Some investments may still make sense. Others may no longer fit current conditions. Tax considerations, financing options, utility programs, equipment availability, customer expectations, and the overall needs of the business can all change.

Good planning is not about stubbornly following a plan that no longer works.

It is about remembering where you intended to go, understanding where you are now, and making adjustments before too much time is lost.

There is still time to complete an important upgrade, correct an inefficient process, improve the customer experience, address a recurring expense, or begin preparing for next year.

But the second half of this year will move just as quickly as the first.

We have just finished celebrating America's independence. Now may be the right time for independent operators to consider what their own independence truly means.

Will it lead to isolation, with every problem handled alone and every lesson learned the hard way?

Or will it become a source of strength?

Independence does not mean having to figure out everything by yourself. It means having the freedom to choose the right people, ask the right questions, and use the experience and resources available to help your business make better decisions.

That strength can come from industry associations, fellow dealers, trusted vendors, accountants, service providers, manufacturers, and other experienced professionals who understand the challenges of operating an independent business.

Their perspective may reveal something that is difficult to see from behind the counter. Sometimes one conversation can uncover an opportunity, prevent an expensive mistake, or confirm that a challenge affecting one business is being felt throughout the market.

The strongest independent businesses are not necessarily the ones that attempt to do everything alone. They are often the ones that build dependable relationships, learn from the experience of others, and know when to reach beyond their own four walls for information and support.

No plan can prevent every breakdown, staffing issue, unexpected expense, or change in the market. But thoughtful planning—and the right people behind you—can keep every surprise from becoming a crisis.

The calendar will not slow down while those decisions are being made.

The question is not how quickly the year will end.

The question is whether you will be ready when it does. ■

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

President Trump Signs Memorandum Promoting Freedom to Fix Vehicles

By Roy Littlefield IV

President Donald J. Trump has signed a Presidential Memorandum aimed at expanding Americans' ability to repair and maintain their own vehicles. This action is a positive development for consumers, independent automotive service providers, and aftermarket businesses seeking greater access to affordable and compliant vehicle repair options.

The memorandum directs the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to issue guidance clarifying what actions vehicle owners may take to repair their own emissions systems while remaining consistent with the Clean Air Act. It also instructs EPA to consider deprioritizing civil enforcement actions against individuals who make good faith attempts to return a vehicle's emissions system to its original configuration.

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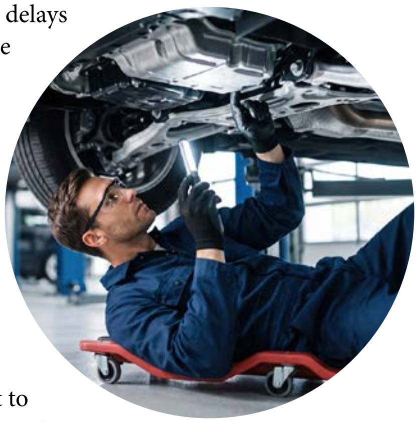
The memorandum further directs EPA to encourage and expedite alternative certification pathways for aftermarket parts. Currently, many emissions-related aftermarket parts rely heavily on certification through the California Air Resources Board. That process can take more than a year even when testing and documentation are complete, creating delays that can limit the availability of compliant parts, increase costs, and reduce options for consumers and repair professionals.



Creating additional certification pathways could provide greater certainty for aftermarket manufacturers while helping ensure consumers and independent repair facilities have access to compliant, affordable replacement parts. Greater clarity from EPA can also help vehicle owners and repair professionals better understand what repairs are permitted under federal law.

This action is part of a broader Administration effort to reduce regulatory burdens affecting vehicle ownership, repair, and manufacturing. The White House cited previous actions related to agricultural and non-road equipment repairs, fuel-economy requirements, and California vehicle mandates as examples of efforts intended to lower costs for American families.

SSDA-AT representing WMDA/CAR on the federal level views the memorandum as a meaningful step toward strengthening consumer choice and supporting the independent automotive service sector. Automotive service providers play an essential role in keeping vehicles safe, reliable, and on the road. Policies that reduce unnecessary barriers to repair while preserving important environmental safeguards can help lower costs and improve access to needed vehicle maintenance and repairs.

SSDA-AT will continue monitoring EPA's implementation of the memorandum, including forthcoming guidance affecting emissions-system repairs and alternative certification options for aftermarket parts. ■

EDITORIAL

SSDA-AT Supports Effort to Preserve Consumer Choice in Vehicle Purchases

By Roy Littlefield III

The legislation aligns with broader policy discussions focused on affordability, supply chain stability, and the pace of regulatory-driven transitions in the automotive sector.

SSDA-AT representing WMDA/CAR on the federal level supports congressional efforts to preserve consumer choice in vehicle purchasing decisions, including legislation such as the Preserving Choice in Vehicle Purchases Act of 2025 (S.996 & H.R. 346). The proposal reflects growing recognition in Congress that vehicle markets function most effectively when consumers retain access to a wide range of technologies, including internal combustion engines, hybrid systems, and emerging alternative fuel options.

The legislation aligns with broader policy discussions focused on affordability, supply chain stability, and the pace of regulatory-driven transitions in the automotive sector. As federal and state policies continue to evolve, lawmakers are increasingly evaluating how emissions standards, technology mandates, and compliance frameworks may influence the availability and cost of vehicles for consumers.

The Preserving Choice in Vehicle Purchases Act is designed to reinforce the principle that consumer demand, rather than regulatory restriction, should remain the primary driver of vehicle offerings in the marketplace. The bill seeks to ensure that federal agencies do not implement rules that would effectively limit the availability of certain vehicle types by favoring specific technologies over others.

Supporters of the legislation note that maintaining a diverse vehicle market is important for consumers with different driving needs, infrastructure access, and budget constraints. Rural and urban communities alike may face different transportation realities, and access to multiple vehicle technologies can help address those differences while preserving affordability and practicality.

The legislation would also reinforce congressional intent to maintain competitive market conditions, allowing manufacturers to continue producing a mix of vehicle types while responding to consumer demand and regional needs. This approach is intended to avoid unintended consequences that could arise from a rapid or uneven transition in vehicle technology availability.

SSDA-AT will continue to monitor the progress of S.996 and H.R. 346 as they move through the legislative process. The association remains engaged in policy discussions that impact vehicle availability, consumer affordability, and long-term service and maintenance considerations across the automotive sector. ■

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