



Sen. Feinstein Urges EPA to Complete Long-Delayed Safety Study on Small Engine Air Quality Regulations

- Presses EPA to meet the February 2, 2006 deadline set by Congress -

January 19, 2006

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) yesterday urged the Environmental Protection Agency to meet a February 2, 2006 statutory deadline for completion of a safety study on long-delayed air quality regulations for lawnmowers and other small engines. Senator Feinstein pointed out that small engine manufacturers themselves have publicly stated that no safety problems for consumers would be caused by the proposed air quality rule, and so the regulations should be finalized as quickly as possible.

In a letter to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson, Senator Feinstein wrote, **“The law is clear on this matter. It should be easy for EPA to finish its safety study and the small engines rule where the manufacturers themselves believe that the rule will improve air quality and benefit the public health without any adverse impact on consumer safety.”**

Under the FY06 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, EPA is required to complete this study within six months of the bill’s enactment on August 2, 2005. Senator Feinstein further pointed out that the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 required EPA to complete the air quality regulations for small engines by December 2004, over a year ago.

The following is the text of Senator Feinstein’s letter:

January 18, 2006

The Honorable Stephen Johnson
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson,

I urge EPA to meet the statutory deadline of February 2, 2006 to complete its safety study on long-delayed air quality regulations for lawnmowers and other small engines, and to finalize the regulations expeditiously thereafter.

The law is clear on this matter: Public Law 109-54, The Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for 2006, requires EPA's completion of the safety study within six months of the bill's enactment on August 2, 2005. Moreover, Public Law 108-199 required EPA to complete the air quality regulations for small engines by December 2004, over a year ago.

Significantly, the small engine manufacturers themselves have publicly stated that there is no safety problem with the proposed air quality rule. Four of these manufacturers – Tecumseh, Honda, Kawasaki, and Kohler – have submitted letters to EPA stating that cleaner small engines including catalytic converters will not cause safety problems for consumers. I would like to quote directly from their letters:

- “[W]e have confidence that, given sufficient lead time, we will be capable of manufacturing products that will comply with the new Federal standard, even if catalysts are required, without compromising our commitment to consumer safety” (Tecumseh);
- “Kawasaki is confident there will be no increased risk to public safety as a result of the addition of catalysts to Kawasaki brand products” (Kawasaki);
- “[W]e can state with confidence to EPA as we did to CARB [the California Air Resources Board], that this level of standard stringency for exhaust emissions should not have a significant impact on the safety of future Honda engines or products” (Honda); and
- “Further, we are confident that the resulting compliant product will perform satisfactorily in every way including safety” (Kohler).

It should be easy for EPA to finish its safety study and the small engines rule where the manufacturers themselves believe that the rule will improve air quality and benefit the public health without any adverse impact on consumer safety.

I am grateful for your attention to this matter, and look forward to working with you to put this important rule into effect at long last.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

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