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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senators Collins and Cardin Introduce Mid-Level Ethanol Bill to Protect Consumers

Senators Whitehouse and Landrieu also Sponsor “Mid-Level Ethanol Blends Act of 2009”

WASHINGTON, D. C., September 15, 2009 – Yesterday, Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) and Mary Landrieu (D-La.) introduced strong legislation designed to protect consumers, the environment, public health and manufacturers from the introduction of intermediate, or mid-level, ethanol blends in gasoline fuel, such as E15. S.1666, the “Mid-Level Ethanol Blends Act of 2009” would ensure new fuels introduced into the marketplace are compatible with the inventory of on-road and non-road gasoline engines, including boat engines, currently in use. Since the Clean Air Act (CAA) prohibits the sale of mid-level ethanol blends, the ethanol industry is currently seeking a waiver from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to sell E15 as a general purpose fuel.

Taking a “science-first” approach, S. 1666 is designed to protect consumers with marine engines, outdoor power equipment, other non-road engines as well as automobiles. The bill requires that EPA’s Science Advisory Board (SAB) study the compatibility of such fuels with current engines before a waiver can be granted. The study would also include a comprehensive analysis of available independent scientific evidence on the compatibility of mid-level ethanol fuels with the emission requirements of the CAA and the operability of engines, among other things.

“During these difficult economic times, equipment damage due to ethanol-gasoline fuel blends only adds to the many challenges facing our nation’s farmers, fishermen, independent woodsmen, and recreational industry,” said Senator Collins. “As we pursue strategies to lessen our dependence on foreign oil, we must also take action to ensure that ethanol fuel blends are safe and efficient for small engines.”

“Ethanol simply burns differently than gasoline. I fully support the development of biofuels to help cure the U.S. of its dependence on foreign oil, but we need to make such a transition in a way that helps, not hurts, commercial and recreational equipment, as well as the environment,” said Senator Cardin, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. “We need to let good science guide us in making sure that we are getting the clean air benefits and engine performance that boaters, lawn care companies and others who rely on smaller engines deserve.”

“NMMA applauds and thanks Senators Collins, Cardin, Whitehouse and Landrieu for introducing this important, common-sense bill,” said NMMA President Thom Dammrich. “This legislation validates a science-first approach to ethanol policy and shines the spotlight on the myriad of issues associated with hasty attempts by ethanol advocates to introduce mid-level ethanol blends into the marketplace.”

NMMA has raised serious concerns about the potential impacts of mid-level ethanol blends on recreational marine engines and boats, including increased air emissions, performance and durability issues, as well as warranty concerns. No recreational marine engines, fuel systems or boats are currently designed, calibrated, certified or warranted to run on any fuel with more than 10 percent ethanol. S. 1666 is supported by a wide and diverse coalition of organizations, including environmental groups, engine manufacturers, food groups, consumer groups, and refiners.

To read the bill, [click here](#). For more information, contact Mat Dunn at 202-737-9760; mdunn@nmma.org or [click here](#) for additional background materials on ethanol.

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About NMMA: National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) is the leading association representing the recreational boating industry in North America. NMMA member companies produce more than 80 percent of the boats, engines, trailers, accessories and gear used by boaters and anglers throughout the U.S. and Canada. The association is dedicated to industry growth through programs in public policy advocacy, market statistics and research, product quality assurance and promotion of the boating lifestyle. For more information, visit www.nmma.org.