

Blended fuel legislation threatens GA

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AOPA is lobbying to amend a bill that could threaten all of piston-engine general aviation.

The "10 by 10 Act" (H.R.4357 and S.3553) would require all motor vehicle gasoline sold in the United States be blended with 10-percent renewable fuel by the year 2010.

"The intent of the legislation is certainly well-meaning, but the legislative staff who wrote it were apparently unaware that almost all renewable fuels are incompatible with current piston-powered GA aircraft," said AOPA President Phil Boyer.

So AOPA is working to educate Congress before the bill progresses any further in the legislative process.

AOPA is asking lawmakers to exempt aviation gasoline (avgas) from the requirement. And AOPA wants another provision so that alcohol-free premium-grade automobile gasoline remains available for use in aircraft flying with an autogas STC.

Ethanol — an alcohol distilled from corn — is the most common renewable fuel. But tests by the FAA and Cessna have shown that ethanol blends can't be used safely in today's piston aircraft.

Ethanol-based fuels attract water into an aircraft's fuel system, which can lead to engine failure, Boyer explained to bill sponsors Rep. Gil Gutknecht (R-Minn.) and Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa).

Ethanol also is incompatible with aircraft fuel systems, including electric fuel pumps, and makes some types of fuel gauges inaccurate.

Because ethanol has less energy per volume than gasoline, an aircraft engine has to consume more of a blended fuel to obtain the same power, and that reduces range.

"AOPA urges you to exempt avgas from the requirements of the '10 by 10 Act,'" [Boyer wrote to Grassley and Gutknecht](#). "States that have enacted laws mandating an ethanol component in gasoline have exempted avgas.

"We request the federal government do the same."

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