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## FUEL FOR THE FUTURE – EPA’s Task is to Assure Protection of the Health of Americans via The Best Fuel/Vehicle Performance at Least Cost

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*Editor's Note: Reg Modlin is a Senior NRS Advisor and a veteran of 40-plus years in the automotive industry. Over the next several posts, he will examine the steps that have been taken – and need to be taken – to attain the transportation fuel that best serves our nation for years ahead. All blogs in this series will be made available [here](#).*

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The search for who is in a position to drive adoption of better gasoline begins and ends with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Their job is to protect the health of every American – a claim that has been voiced by most, if not all, EPA administrators. The EPA is charged with reducing harmful vehicle emissions to the greatest degree possible while taking into consideration availability, costs, and lead time of technologies and energy. The Clean Air Act directs them to accomplish this through regulating fuels, vehicles or both.

With ethanol known to be an effective, least cost, readily available, infrastructure-compatible octane enhancer, EPA must take action to:

- Support adoption of high-octane fuels as an efficiency improvement and emissions reduction enabler. As a first step, identify a high-octane certification fuel specification. Then, call on automotive manufacturers to build all new light-duty vehicles certified and warranted to use high-octane fuels, to be compatible with at least E25 fuels beginning with the 2023 model year.
- Remove market barriers to expanded use of ethanol. Now that seasonal Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) constraints for E15 have been removed, other urgent items are well known: changing the “premium required” statement in vehicle owners’ manuals to a more accurate “high-octane required” for vehicles certified using high-octane fuel; removing seasonal RVP constraints for all fuels containing ethanol; and increasing their calculated "R" factor to be consistent with data from modern engines.
- Update test methods and environmental assessments to reflect modern day facts. Adjust land use and crop yield assumptions in modeling to reflect current-day assessments. Use the Department of Energy’s GREET model to assess total life cycle emissions. And, update the MOVES model to reflect current day information.

The trigger to accomplish these actions will certainly be the recognition that high-octane (98 RON) gasoline is the next step enabler for the adoption of improved efficiency technologies that are currently available outside of the United States but not deployable here because of poor fuel quality.

**Read the previous blogs in the Auto Executive Speaks Out series:**

- [An Introduction](#)
- [What is the Overall Picture of a “Future Fuel” Today?](#)
- [Ethanol is Available Now to Provide HOLC Gasoline at Least Cost to Consumers](#)
- [Infrastructure on Track to Support On-Time Transition to HOLC Ethanol-Based Fuel by 2023](#)

The full series is available [here](#).