

# Why Is the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Spreading Misinformation About E15?

---

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Trump Administration took steps to allow 15 percent ethanol blends (E15) to be sold in conventional gasoline areas on a year-round basis (instead of just 9 months per year).

In response, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) issued a statement claiming that “gasoline with more ethanol produces more smog, which can harm the health of people—especially children and the elderly. That’s why the Clean Air Act makes it illegal to sell generic E15 gasoline in the summer.”

The NWF statement about E15 is factually inaccurate.

- Gasoline with more ethanol does not produce more smog
  - The U.S. Department of Energy – under President Obama – tested 86 vehicles operated up to 120,000 miles each on standard gasoline, E10, E15, and E20
  - In DOE’s own words: “[t]he resulting Energy Department data showed [no statistically significant loss of vehicle performance \(emissions, fuel economy, and maintenance issues\) attributable to the use of E15 fuel](#) compared to straight gasoline”
- It is not illegal to sell E15 under the Clean Air Act (CAA)
  - [EPA expressly allows the sale of E15](#) – for use in 2001 model year and newer vehicles – under the CAA based on an [EPA finding that E15 does not increase emissions or threaten public health](#) in comparison to other on-road fuels
  - E15 is available at ~1600 stations in 30 states at a \$.03-.10 discount to regular gasoline
- While E15 is allowed under the CAA, an ambiguity in the regulation itself makes it very difficult to sell E15 year-round
  - In the summer, the CAA requires gasoline to have a lower vapor pressure – called Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) – to minimize fuel evaporation and related smog formation
  - EPA allows 10 percent ethanol blends (E10) – the predominant fuel in use today – to have a slightly higher summertime RVP than standard gasoline because E10 reduces smog-forming emissions in other areas that offset the impacts of a higher vapor pressure
  - [E15 is a cleaner fuel than E10 – with an even better vapor pressure profile than E10 – but federal fuel regulations do not explicitly provide E15 with the “RVP waiver” allowed for E10 because E15 did not exist when the regulation was written](#)
  - Without the RVP waiver, gasoline wholesalers and retailers cannot use the same gasoline “blendstock” for E15 that they use for E10, which effectively blocks E15 in the summer
  - Establishing E10/E15 RVP parity fixes the problem, and opens the marketplace to a [cheaper, cleaner fuel that also reduces GHG emissions significantly](#)

NWF has spent years working directly with the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers Association’s anti-biofuel campaign. That’s ExxonMobil and other oil giants. Why is NWF buying into the oil industry’s misinformation campaign?