



Senator Feinstein Protects Efforts to Limit Emissions from  
Lawn Mowers and Other Small Engines  
June 9, 2005

**Washington, DC** – The Senate Appropriations Committee today approved a compromise to head off an effort that could have side-tracked new standards to reduce emissions from lawn mowers and other small off-road engines in California and across the nation.

In a unanimous vote, the Committee approved an amendment by Senator Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Senator Kit Bond (R-MO) that revised a provision Senator Bond had earlier inserted into the proposed FY2006 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

**“This agreement protects the rights of California to reduce emissions from lawn mowers and other small off-road engines and the EPA to improve air quality nationwide,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“The proposed new California regulation, set to take effect in 2007, is the equivalent of removing 1.8 million automobiles from the State’s roads by 2020 and it is a critical step in California’s efforts to reduce dangerous and costly emissions.”**

**“Overall, the agreement preserves the ability of EPA to continue moving forward with the development of a regulation to require lower emissions from millions of new lawn mowers and other small engines sold each year, patterned after the regulation adopted by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) in 2003,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“The lower emissions will help states outside of California meet federally mandated clean air goals.”**

Barbara Riordan, Acting Air Resources Board Chairman, said in a statement issued today, **“We are pleased that an agreement has been reached that allows California to get the USEPA waiver we need to implement our small engine rule in 2007. The closure of the safety concerns will give USEPA the basis for a timely approval of our small engine rule.”**

Before reaching the agreement, Senator Feinstein received a letter from Barbara Riordan, Acting Chairman of the California Air Resources Board, which said the original Bond amendment would have interfered with the waiver California needs from the EPA to move ahead with its rules on small engines. “The result is more air pollution for millions of California residents,” Riordan wrote.

Senator Bond's original provision would have forbid the EPA from establishing new national standards for small engine emissions until after a fire safety study is conducted by an independent organization based in Sweden, at a cost of \$650,000. According to Riordan and a number of environmental organizations, it also could have indefinitely delayed implementation of the new rules. It also barred the study from moving forward unless the funding were appropriated and at the same time, it provided no funds. The original provision – an unprecedented revision to the Clean Air Act -- would also have prevented EPA from moving forward with the new emissions standards unless it could prove not one job would be even temporarily displaced.

Instead, the amendment passed by the Committee would have the EPA, with input from other federal agencies, conduct and conclude the study within six months of enactment of the bill. The EPA has recently announced that they do not anticipate issuing their draft rule for small engines until January 2006. Therefore, the EPA can do the technical safety study during the next seven months without having to further detail their rulemaking. And because the California rule won't go into effect until 2007, this study will be completed well before California needs its EPA waiver to implement its rule. The new amendment also eliminated Senator Bond's language blocking any new emissions standards if there were any impact on employment.

**“I worked hard and long two years ago to reach an agreement that prevented Senator Bond from halting California's efforts to proceed with plans to reduce small-engine emissions and establish a time-table for national standards. So I was not pleased to be confronted with this task again,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“I would have preferred that this whole issue were not reopened. But faced with the prospect of having an unmovable roadblock for both California and the nation, I believe we reached an agreement that will now enable us to move ahead.”**

*The language of the amendment follows: “None of the funds provided in this Act or any other act may be used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to publish proposed or final regulations pursuant to the requirements of section 428(b) of Division G of Public Law 108-199 until the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, in coordination with other appropriate federal agencies, has completed and published a technical study to look at safety issues, including the risk of fire and burn to consumers in use, associated with compliance with the regulations. Not later than six months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall complete and publish the technical study. The new agreement approved by the Committee requires that the EPA, “in coordination with other appropriate federal agencies, has completed and published a technical study to look at safety issues, including the risk of fire and burn to consumers in use, associated with compliance with the regulations. Not later than six months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall complete and publish the technical study.”*

Senator Feinstein noted that the EPA has already performed safety testing on catalyst-equipped lawn and garden engines and has found they do not increase the risk of burns or fires. And a number of companies already sell them, including Briggs & Stratton in Europe.