

ASSOCIATED PRESS

3:00 p.m. February 8, 2007

WASHINGTON - Determining how best to speed ethanol and other alternative fuels from refinery to gas pump would rest with the government under legislation the House passed Thursday.

President Bush is promoting such fuels as a way to reduce dependence on foreign oil and cut air pollution. But their widespread use has been hampered by problems with the current system of transporting and storing the fuels.

Ethanol and some biodiesel blends, for example, can corrode tank and pipeline materials, build up sediment, clog filters and cause emissions volatility. In addition, it costs tens of thousands of dollars for the nation's 160,000 gas stations to refit pumps to dispense biofuels.

The bill, which passed by a 400-3 vote, directs the Environmental Protection Agency to study new technologies that would eliminate some of these infrastructure problems.

The bill by House Science Committee chairman Bart Gordon, D-Tenn., also directs the government to develop an affordable and quick way to test the sulfur content of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel fuel.

At issue is whether such low sulfur diesel may absorb enough residual sulfur as it moves from the refinery through pipelines and trucks to exceed EPA limits.

"This bill not only addresses our energy independence issues but it also addresses clean energy issues by working to mitigate potential problems that can rise from transporting clean fuels," said Rep. Ralph Hall, R-Texas, the committee's top Republican.

The measure now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Bush said in his State of the Union address last month that alternative fuels are essential to his goal of cutting gasoline usage by 20 percent in the next 10 years. He said there should be a requirement of 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels in 2017, nearly five times the current target.

The House spent nearly two hours on an amendment supporting the use of domestically produced alternative fuels on aircraft.

The measure, which passed 385-23, gave Republicans a platform to complain about the expense of the Pentagon's supplying Speaker Nancy Pelosi with a jet large enough to travel nonstop to her home in California.

House Republicans also demanded second votes on four amendments to protest a new Democratic-generated rule that allows the delegates from the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and three territories to vote on amendments, but not on final passage of legislation.

"We're creating the record in case there is a lawsuit"

regarding the constitutionality of the new rule, said Rep. Lee Terry, R-Neb.

On the Net:

Information on the bill, H.R. 547, can be found at thomas.loc.gov/





<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/business/20070208-1500-congress-alternativefuels.html>

