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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 27, 2008**

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**Gasoline and Oil Inspection Board adopts measure to encourage more ethanol blending in North Carolina**

RALEIGH – The N.C. Gasoline and Oil Inspection Board today adopted a measure intended to stave off potential fuel shortages in North Carolina.

The board approved a temporary rule changing certain specifications for fuel blends of up to 10 percent ethanol. The changes will make it easier for fuel distributors to blend ethanol with traditional fuel. They will not affect fuel quality. State officials expect the temporary rule to take effect in early March following approval by the state Rules Review Commission.

The federal Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 requires fuel producers to use at least 36 billion gallons of biofuel by 2022. The mandate is expected to increase demand for ethanol from 5.4 billion gallons to 9 billion gallons this year.

Existing state rules permit blending, but they do not provide for variances from certain specifications that may occur with ethanol blends. Because of this, many fuel suppliers are reluctant to permit distributors to use their products in blending. Without a change, fuel supplies across North Carolina could have been disrupted as national demand for biofuel increases.

“Other states have already made changes in their fuel specification standards to facilitate ethanol blending,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “Any delays in doing this in North Carolina could have disrupted fuel supplies, increased fuel costs for consumers and placed us at an economic disadvantage to other states.”

The board has begun proceedings to make the rule change permanent. A public hearing on the permanent rule is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, at 10 a.m. in the Martin Building at the State Fairgrounds.

The five-member Gasoline and Oil Inspection Board sets rules and standards pertaining to gasoline and oil products. The board is composed of the commissioner of agriculture, the director of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Standards Division and three members appointed by the governor.

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 Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture