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## Heavy-Duty Engine Makers Say Biodiesel Use OK will Not Void Warranties

With the growing popularity of vegetable oil based BioDiesel, most heavy-duty engine makers have changed their policies to authorize biodiesel mixtures of at least 5% in their engines.

Almost all manufacturers said that using biodiesel blends they approve would not affect engine warranties, although they did say that if the fuel caused an engine breakdown, engine warranties would not cover it.

Statements by **Cummins Inc.**, **Caterpillar Inc.**, **Volvo Trucks North America**, **Mack Trucks Inc.** and **Detroit Diesel Corp.** all say customers can safely use some level of biodiesel.

Engine maker policy statements indicate a sharp change from recent positions. As an example, **Caterpillar** warned three years ago that "use of more than 5% biodiesel fuel can cause premature failures. The repair for these failures would not be covered under the Caterpillar warranty." However on April 16, 2007 Caterpillar said that it now permits blends of up to 30% biodiesel for use in its pre-2007 engines. The statement said that Caterpillar has not yet decided on percentage of biodiesel use for its 2007 engines but expects to issue guidelines later this year.

**Cummins** announced March 21 that it has raised the approved biodiesel to B20 or 20% BioDiesel blended with #2 diesel fuel, both in its older engines and in its 2007 models. The approval of B20 included its 2002 and later emissions-compliant ISX, ISM, ISL, ISC and ISB engines as well as 2007 engines, and several ratings of off-highway and marine engines. Cummins chief engineer of the advanced alternative fuel programs Edward Lyford-Pike stated, "We have completed exhaustive analysis and test evaluations, which enable Cummins to provide the necessary guidance and information to our customers for the proper and successful use of this fuel in our engine, this will enable our customers to have a choice that includes renewable fuel."

Louis Wenzler, on-highway market communications director for Cummins, stated "the use of biodiesel does not affect Cummins warranties, it is important that any fuel meets industry standards. If you have fuel, and it has water in it, that water could cause the injector to freeze up and fail, and then the warranty would not apply. If biodiesel is made to standards, it does not have water in it."

The National Biodiesel Board has agreed with that viewpoint stating "Since engine manufacturers warranty the materials and workmanship of their engines, they do not warranty fuel of any kind, If there are engine problems caused by a fuel (again, whether that fuel is petrodiesel fuel or biodiesel fuel), these problems are not related to the materials or workmanship of the engine but are the responsibility of the fuel supplier and not the engine manufacturer."

Amber Thurlo Pearson, spokeswoman for the National Biodiesel Board, is quoted as stating "We believe that Cummins decision will encourage other engine makers to raise the levels of their biodiesel standard to at least 20%. We feel that B20 is viable in every diesel engine, B20 offers a seamless transition to biofuel and has an all-year-long weather capability when it is blended correctly." Pearson stated the National BioDiesel Board's goal "for growth in the industry is 5 by 2015. What that means is by 2015, we foresee displacing up to 5% of the on-road diesel fuel [with biodiesel]."

**Volvo** and **Mack** said they would authorize B5 blends, Spokesmen for both companies said that neither Volvo nor Mack had ever rejected a warranty claim for an engine because it ran on biodiesel.

**Volvo** spokesman Jim McNamara stated that “Volvo Trucks North America engine warranties cover up to a B5 blend on the Volvo D11, D13 and D16 engines for 2007, the same limit applies to the pre-2007 Volvo D12.”

**Mack** Trucks spokesman John Walsh stated, “Mack Truck has authorized its warranty for B5 fuel for its 2007 heavy duty MP7 and MP8 engines,”. Walsh said the authorization also applied to Mack’s pre-’07 engines.

**Detroit Diesel** Corp. said in a 2004 statement that blends of up to B20 could be used in its engines, but it did not recommend a larger percentage than B5. Detroit Diesel said “Biodiesel meeting the D6751 specifications can be blended up to 20% maximum by volume in diesel fuel, failures attributed to the use of biodiesel will not be covered by product warranty.”

**International** Truck and Engine Corp spokesman Roy Wiley said the firm has not yet reached any conclusion on biodiesel in its new MaxxForce engines, “because we won’t be building them until next year.”

**Paccar Corp.**, parent company of Kenworth Truck Co. and Peterbilt Motors Co., has so far declined comment regarding BioDiesel use. However a number of these trucks use the Caterpillar engine and Caterpillar has been on record as saying that it now permits blends of up to 30% biodiesel for use in its pre-2007 engines.