**AYC Ecology North**

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**Ethanol Becomes Optional in Florida**

By Tom Kaiser, [BoatingIndustry.com](http://www.boatingindustry.com/top-stories/2013/06/04/ethanol-becomes-optional-in-florida/)

A 2008 bill requiring that all gasoline sold in Florida includes a percentage of ethanol has been overturned, a move that is good news for the marine industry in its ongoing battle against the damaging effects of the alternative fuel on small engines.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott signed H.B. 4001 last Friday, which nullifies the state’s 2008 Renewable Fuel Standard Act and removes the requirement that all gasoline offered for sale in the state includes a percentage — nearly 10 percent — of ethanol. Supporters of ethanol strongly opposed the move, and argued that it will prevent job creation and investment in the state by alternative fuel and traditional energy companies.

Supporters of the repeal argued that ethanol increases water content in fuels, which can have a damaging effect on metal, plastics and rubber, damaging many small engines or reducing their life cycle. While the previous legislation did not apply to fuel used in collector vehicles, off-road vehicles, motorcycles or other small engines, obtaining fuel without ethanol added has been challenging and can lead to accidental use in engines not designed for alternative fuels.

The Renewable Fuel Standard Act was intended to reduce the state’s dependance on foreign oil, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to spur a growing high-tech alternative fuels industry.

Going forward, service stations will have the option to sell fuel that contains ethanol. Some repeal supporters have argued that removing the ethanol requirement could lead to lower gas prices for consumers.

The long-term effects of the repeal remain to be seen, as the state’s fuel sellers must still comply with federal regulations that require a certain amount of ethanol in gasoline. Gov. Scott has joined other governors in petitioning the Environmental Protection Agency to waive the federal requirement.