



News Release

Gasoline lab results to be tested in Nunavut

IQALUIT, Nunavut (March 26, 2002) – Tests ordered by the Government of Nunavut show the composition of current gasoline stocks is different than last year's gasoline, Public Works and Services Minister Peter Kattuk said today.

The tests have not provided definitive answers; however, they do show higher levels of the unsaturated hydrocarbon, olefin, in this year's supply of gasoline in the Baffin and Kivalliq regions compared to last year's levels. As well, unusually high levels of polar material were also found.

In addition, gasoline in the two regions does not contain a deposit control additive (DCA). The additive, which helps keep engines clean, is a requirement set by the Canadian General Standards Board.

The effect of these factors on engine operation has not yet been determined and Minister Kattuk reminds the public to continue to take all safety precautions when traveling on the land or the ice.

“We can't ignore the fact that the problem with snow machines this winter is having an impact on the daily lives of many Nunavummiut,” Minister Kattuk said. “At this point we don't know if gasoline is causing the engine problems. We are aggressively seeking answers. National and international scientists have presented some theories, and we need to test those here in Nunavut.”

The government, in cooperation with the Alberta Research Council, is conducting tests on new snow machines in Rankin Inlet. These will test theories put forward by labs in Canada and in the United Kingdom. Testing will begin the first week in April.

“Rankin Inlet was chosen because of its cold temperatures, snow coverage, and the location of the Petroleum Products Division office,” the minister said.

The test will monitor the operations of two new snow machines – both will operate with this year's gasoline, but one will also have the addition of DCA and antioxidants. A technician from the Alberta Research Council will be on site for these tests. The snow machines will be exposed to normal operating conditions including cold starts, towing and distance travel.

“Many Nunavummiut have expressed concerns about the quality of gasoline. We take these concerns seriously. That's why the government is exploring all testing options,” Minister Kattuk said. “We want to determine exactly what the problem is so we can take steps to fix it.”

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