

napim Bulletin

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FROM: NAPIM Government Relations Committee

VEGETABLE OIL BILL INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS

On April 1, 1993, Senators Bond (D-MO) and Wellstone (D-MN) introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate which would require all federal printing to use cost competitive lithographic inks containing specified levels of vegetable oils. The bill, known as "The Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1993" (S.716), is sponsored by 16 Senators including, in addition to Bond and Wellstone, Senators Glenn (D-OH) and Grassley (R-IA). At the same time, Reps. Durbin (D-IL), Penny (D-MN) and Bereuter (R-NE) introduced a companion bill in the House (HR.1595) supported by more than 70 Representatives. There is little question that the bill will be enacted.

S.716 was drafted by Senator Wellstone's staff in close cooperation with Senator Bond's staff as reported in NAPIM's *Washington Newsletter*. An ad hoc task force from NAPIM attended a working meeting with the staffs of Wellstone, Bond and other Senators and Representatives on February 17, 1993. As a result of this meeting and subsequent discussion with Senator Wellstone's staff, NAPIM was able to eliminate much unfavorable language in the bill and to arrive at feasible levels for minimum vegetable oil content.

Provisions of the Bill

The primary provisions of the bill will require that:

"(1) IN GENERAL. - Notwithstanding any other law, beginning on the date that is 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, all lithographic printing performed or procured by a Federal agency that uses oil in its ink shall use the maximum amount of vegetable oil that is technologically feasible and results in printing costs that are cost-competitive with printing using petroleum-based inks.

"(2) MINIMUM PERCENTAGES. - Except as provided in paragraph (3), in no event shall a Federal agency use any ink that contains less than the following percentages of vegetable oil in its ink used for lithographic printing:

- (A) In the case of news inks, 40 percent.
- (B) In the case of sheet-fed inks, 20 percent.
- (C) In the case of forms inks, 20 percent.
- (D) In the case of heat-set inks, 10 percent."

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Note that unlike previous bills that failed to be enacted, Senator Wellstone's bill calls for the use of any vegetable oil as opposed to previous proposed legislation which specified soy oil specifically. While some semi-drying oils such as soy oil may be the ingredient of choice for direct replacement of petroleum oil in newsinks, the bill permits the use of any vegetable oil including linseed or other drying oils commonly used in printing ink as well as semi-drying oils such as soy, corn, canola or the like.

Note that the bill applies only to inks used for lithographic printing performed or procured by a Federal agency. It does not apply to printing used or performed by any state government or to civilian markets.

NAPIM's Position

In view of NAPIM's participation in drafting the legislation, Senator Wellstone has asked if the Association would consider endorsing his bill. However, at its meeting of March 21st, the NAPIM Board decided that NAPIM would not endorse the current draft of the legislation. This decision is based on a strong underlying philosophical concern about the encroachment of the Congress (and State Legislators) into the technical aspects of industrial manufacturing when health and safety issues are not involved. The Board noted that this is of particular concern to members of the printing ink industry where day-to-day formulation of proprietary products is necessary to meet specific printing requirements for a wide variety of printing conditions and uses. It also reflects a concern with the proliferation of this type of legislation in state legislatures.

Other Vegetable Oil Bills

The intense promotion of soy inks by the American Soybean Association seems to have created a misconception that the use of soy inks could have a major favorable impact on a cleaner environment. As a result, legislation calling for the use of soy oils in printing ink has begun to appear at the state as well as the federal level. Soy legislation was not passed in the last session of Congress, but as noted above, it is almost certain that the more moderate Wellstone Bill will be enacted.

Purchasing Officials in 26 states now purchase soy ink for printing in their states. Several states are also considering legislation to require the use of soy inks. Including Minnesota, New Jersey, Alabama and Arkansas. Other states will probably follow. It is interesting to note that the state legislation proposed to date requires the use of soy based inks in specific applications such as state printing or newspapers, but does not go as far as the Wellstone Bill in requiring minimum levels of vegetable oil in the ink itself. Copies of S.716 and the foregoing state bills are available from the NAPIM office upon request.

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