

Exhibit 9

EXHIBIT 9

Executive Orders from the states of Minnesota,
Kansas, Iowa, North Dakota, and Nebraska

Minnesota

Executive Order 07-08 (June 28, 2007)

Executive Order (August 31, 2007)

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Governor Pawlenty today signed an emergency executive order waiving certain restrictions for drivers of commercial vehicles engaged in the transportation of gasoline and of motor fuels. The emergency order will ease the distribution of gasoline across Greater Minnesota.

The following is the text of the Governor's order:

EMERGENCY EXECUTIVE ORDER 07-08

PROVIDING FOR EMERGENCY RELIEF FROM REGULATIONS TO MOTOR CARRIERS AND DRIVERS OPERATING IN MINNESOTA

I, TIM PAWLENTY, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Minnesota Statutes 2006, Section 221.0269, do hereby issue this Emergency Executive Order:

WHEREAS, many motor fuel terminals outside of the seven county metropolitan area are experiencing difficulties in obtaining their full supply of gasoline; and

WHEREAS, the motor fuel terminals are part of the distribution chain and gasoline from the terminals is pumped into trucks for delivery to local gas stations across Greater Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, many drivers who haul motor fuels are experiencing delays at the terminals before they are able to fill their trucks, or are needing to obtain motor fuels from alternative terminals which are further from their delivery area; and

WHEREAS, because drivers are obtaining motor fuels at alternative terminals, long lines and delays are being experienced at motor fuel terminals across the state; and

WHEREAS, the week of July 4th is one of the peak travel times within Minnesota and relief is needed to ensure that gas stations remain supplied with adequate amounts of motor fuel for Minnesota consumers to ensure that consumers living and traveling in Greater Minnesota are not stranded without adequate access to necessary motor fuels.

NOW, THEREFORE, I hereby declare that:

1. A state of emergency exists in Minnesota that requires relief from regulations incorporated in Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 221.0314, subdivision 9, pertaining to hours of service for carriers and drivers of commercial motor vehicles while in the process of obtaining and transporting motor fuels.
2. Nothing herein shall be construed to relieve motor carriers and drivers from regulations pertaining to qualifications of drivers, driving of commercial motor vehicles, commercial drivers' licenses, drug and alcohol testing and use or financial responsibility.
3. No motor carrier operating under the terms of this emergency order shall require or allow a fatigued or ill driver to operate a motor vehicle. A driver who informs a carrier that he or she needs immediate rest shall be given at least eight consecutive hours off duty before the driver is required return to service.
4. Upon the expiration date of this emergency order, or when a driver has been relieved of all duty and responsibility to provide direct assistance to the emergency effort, a driver that has had at least 34 consecutive hours off-duty shall be permitted to start his or her on-duty status hours of service record at zero.

This order shall be effective immediately and shall remain in effect until 12:01 a.m. CDT July 19, 2007, unless superseded or extended under Minnesota Statutes, section 221.0269, Subdivision 2.

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Governor Pawlenty today signed an emergency executive order waiving certain restrictions for drivers of commercial vehicles engaged in the transportation of gasoline and motor fuels. The emergency order will ease the distribution of gasoline across Greater Minnesota.

The following is the text of the Governor's order:

I, TIM PAWLENTY, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Minnesota Statutes 2006, Section 221.0269, do hereby issue this Emergency Executive Order:

WHEREAS, flooding, lightning strikes and other unanticipated problems at refineries in other states have disrupted the normal supply of gasoline and diesel fuels in Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, many motor fuel terminals outside of the seven county metropolitan area are experiencing difficulties in obtaining their normal supply of gasoline and have been intermittently shut down for periods of time; and

WHEREAS, the motor fuel terminals are part of the distribution chain and gasoline from the terminals is pumped into trucks for delivery to local gas stations across Greater Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, many commercial motor carriers who haul motor fuels are experiencing significant delays at the terminals before they are able to fill their trucks, and/or are needing to obtain motor fuels from alternative terminals that are a significant distance from their delivery area; and

WHEREAS, because drivers are obtaining motor fuels at alternative terminals, there are long lines and delays at motor fuel terminals across the state; and

WHEREAS, Labor Day weekend is one of the peak travel times within Minnesota and relief is needed to ensure that local gas stations are able to obtain motor fuels for Minnesota consumers to ensure that consumers living and traveling in Greater Minnesota are not stranded without adequate access to necessary motor fuels; and

WHEREAS, the upcoming harvest season is one of the peak times for consumption of diesel fuel in the state and relief is need to ensure that farmers have reliable supplies of diesel fuel to harvest crops.

NOW, THEREFORE, I hereby declare that:

1. An emergency exists in Minnesota that requires relief from regulations incorporated in Minnesota Statutes 2006, Section 221.0314, Subdivision 9, pertaining to hours of service for carriers and drivers of commercial motor vehicles while in the process of obtaining and transporting motor fuels.
2. Nothing herein shall be construed to relieve motor carriers and drivers from regulations pertaining to qualifications of drivers, driving of commercial motor vehicles, commercial drivers' licenses, drug and alcohol testing and use or financial responsibility.
3. No motor carrier operating under the terms of this emergency order shall require or allow a fatigued or ill driver to operate a motor vehicle. A driver who informs a carrier that he or she needs immediate rest shall be given at least ten consecutive hours off duty before the driver is required return to service.
4. Upon the expiration of the effective date of this emergency order, or when a driver or carrier ceases to provide direct assistance to the emergency relief effort, a driver that has had at least thirty four consecutive hours off-duty, shall be permitted to start his or her on-duty status hours and 60/70 hour clock at zero.

This order shall be effective immediately and shall remain in effect for 30 days or until the commercial motor carrier or driver ceases direct assistance in providing emergency relief, whichever occurs earlier. For purposes of this order, direct assistance is defined in Minnesota Statutes 2006, Section 221.0269, Subdivision 3(c). This order may be extended in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2006, Section 221.0269, Subdivision 2.

Kansas
Executive Order 07-19 (July 9, 2007)



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KATHLEEN SEBELIUS, GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER 07-19

WHEREAS, K.S.A. 48-925(b) provides that the Governor may issue orders and proclamations which shall have the enforce and effect of law under subsection (b) of K.S.A. 48-924; and

WHEREAS, on the 5th day of May, 2007, I declared a state of emergency for Kiowa, Barton, Stafford, Pratt, Edwards and Phillips counties as a result of severe weather, including, tornados, hail, high winds and flooding which struck, causing loss of life, personal injury and excessive damage to businesses and homes; and

WHEREAS, on the 16th day of May, 2007, the State Finance Council acted to continue the state of emergency for the above counties until June 18, 2007; and

WHEREAS, on the 22nd day of May, 2007, the Kansas legislature extended the state of emergency until October 31, 2007; and

WHEREAS, on or about the 5th day of May, 2007, a tornado hit and destroyed the Magellan refinery terminal in Great Bend, Kansas. Due to the extent of damage, it is out of service for an undisclosed amount of time. The Great Bend terminal would normally load about 10,000 barrels per day of gasoline and diesel fuel. Therefore, half of the business shifted to Scott City, Kansas and the other half to McPherson and Valley Center, Kansas.

WHEREAS, on the 30th day of June, 2007, I declared a state of emergency for Allen, Anderson, Bourbon, Butler, Chautauqua, Cherokee, Coffey, Cowley, Elk, Franklin, Linn, Miami, Montgomery, Neosho, Osage, Wilson and Woodson counties as a result of severe and constant weather, including flooding, which struck, causing excessive damage to businesses and homes; and

WHEREAS, on or about the 30th day of June, 2007, the Coffeyville Resources refinery terminal was shut down in response to the flooding when an accident occurred. The plant had been transferring oil from a storage facility to the refinery's main storage tank. Because of an elevation difference between the two tanks, the oil continued to flow and caused the main tank to overflow. As a result, more than 71,000 gallons of crude oil spilled into the Verdigris River and surrounding area. Due to the extent of damage and cleanup, it is out of service for an undisclosed amount of time; and

WHEREAS, before the above disasters in Kansas, gasoline demand was up significantly over May of 2006; and

WHEREAS, the western half of Kansas is in the middle of harvesting wheat crops; and

WHEREAS, all of the above is causing long wait times for motor carrier vehicles needing to load fuel; and

WHEREAS, because of the extensive damage to the above fuel refineries has caused long waiting lines for motor carrier vehicles waiting to load fuel there is a shortage of fuel sufficient to pose the imminent threat of widespread or severe loss of property due to the potential for harvest interruptions for the following counties: Barton, Cheyenne, Clark, Cloud, Comanche, Decatur, Edwards, Ellis, Ellsworth, Finney, Ford, Gove, Graham, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Hamilton, Haskell, Hodgeman, Jewell, Kearny, Kiowa, Lane, Lincoln, Logan, Meade, Mitchell, Morton, Ness, Norton, Osborne, Jewell, Kearny, Kiowa, Lane, Lincoln, Logan, Meade, Mitchell, Morton, Ness, Norton, Osborne, Pawnee, Phillips, Rawlins, Republic, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Scott, Seward, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Stafford, Stanton, Stevens, Thomas, Trego, Wallace, and Wichita; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to expedite restoration of fuel services in the affected area and the State of Kansas wishes to accommodate the need to provide assistance to the citizens of these affected counties.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Kansas, I hereby declare it is necessary to assist and expedite all efforts of restoration of fuel services in order to avoid interruption in harvest activities. In order to accommodate this need and to provide assistance to the citizens of Kansas in this extreme situation, I hereby order the temporary suspension of the following as it applies to motor vehicles used in the support efforts:

1. The requirements contained in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, CFR 49, Parts 390-399 under the authority of CFR 49, Part 390.23. Nothing contained in this order shall be construed as waiving any other portion of CFR 49. This exemption applies only to those motor carriers providing direct assistance to the emergency fuel relief effort. No motor carrier operating under the terms of this Order shall require or permit a fatigued or ill driver to operate a commercial motor vehicle.

This temporary order is in effect for thirty (30) days unless rescinded earlier or lengthened by executive order.

This document shall be filed with the Secretary of State as Executive Order No. 07-19 and shall become effective immediately.

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 212S, TOPEKA, KS 66612-1590
Voice 785-296-3232 Fax 785-296-7973 <http://www.governor.ks.gov>

Iowa

Proclamation of Governor Chester J. Culver (July 12, 2007)

PROCLAMATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, THE EMERGENCY EXEMPTION IS ISSUED AS A RESULT OF THE SHORTAGES AND INTERRUPTIONS IN THE AVAILABILITY AND/OR DELIVERY OF THE PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT IOWA.

WHEREAS, SURROUNDING STATES TO IOWA HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY DIMINISHED SUPPLIES OF VARIOUS PETROLEUM PRODUCTS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF IOWANS; AND

WHEREAS, THIS SITUATION HAS RESULTED IN DISTRIBUTION AND DELIVERY PROBLEMS AND HAS AFFECTED THE AVAILABILITY OF GASOLINE AND DIESEL FUEL, AND

WHEREAS, STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE HOURS OF SERVICE REQUIREMENTS OF IOWA CODE 321 SECTION 449 WOULD PREVENT OR HINDER EFFORTS TO COPE WITH THIS DISASTER EMERGENCY.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF IOWA, BY THE POWER AND AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION ARTICLE IV, SECTIONS 1 AND 8 AND IOWA CODE SECTION 29C.6(1) DO HEREBY DECLARE THE ENTIRE STATE TO BE IN A STATE OF DISASTER EMERGENCY. FURTHER:

1. PURSUANT TO IOWA CODE SECTION 29C.6(6), I DO HEREBY SUSPEND THE REGULATORY PROVISIONS OF IOWA CODE 321 SECTION 449 PERTAINING TO HOURS OF SERVICE OF MOTOR CARRIERS AND DRIVERS OF COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES, WHILE TRANSPORTING GASOLINE AND DIESEL FUEL.
2. NOTHING CONTAINED IN THIS DECLARATION SHALL BE CONSTRUED AS AN EXEMPTION FROM THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES AND ALCOHOL USE AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS (49 CFR 382), THE COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE REQUIREMENTS (49 CFR 383), THE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (49 CFR 387), OR ANY OTHER PORTION OF THE REGULATION NOT SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED.
3. NO MOTOR CARRIER OPERATING UNDER THE TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT SHALL REQUIRE OR ALLOW A FATIGUED OR ILL DRIVER TO OPERATE A MOTOR VEHICLE. A DRIVER WHO INFORMS A CARRIER THAT HE OR SHE NEEDS IMMEDIATE REST SHALL BE GIVEN AT LEAST TEN CONSECUTIVE HOURS OFF-DUTY BEFORE THE DRIVER IS REQUIRED TO RETURN TO SERVICE.
4. MOTOR CARRIERS THAT HAVE AN OUT-OF-SERVICE ORDER IN EFFECT **CAN NOT** TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE RELIEF FROM REGULATIONS THAT THIS DECLARATION PROVIDES UNDER TITLE 49 CFR 390.23.
5. THIS EMERGENCY DECLARATION IS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY AND WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL AUGUST 11, 2007, AT 11:59 P.M. CST.
6. UPON THE EXPIRATION OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS EMERGENCY ORDER, OR WHEN A DRIVER HAS BEEN RELIEVED OF ALL DUTY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO THE EMERGENCY EFFORT, A DRIVER THAT HAS HAD AT LEAST 34 CONSECUTIVE HOURS OFF

DUTY SHALL BE PERMITTED TO START HIS OR HER ON-DUTY STATUS HOURS
AND 60/70 HOUR CLOCK AT ZERO.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SUBSCRIBED MY NAME AND CAUSED THE
GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF IOWA TO BE AFFIXED, DONE AT DES MOINES THIS
TWELFTH DAY OF JULY IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD TWO THOUSAND AND SEVEN.

CHESTER J. CULVER
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

MICHAEL A. MAURO
SECRETARY OF STATE

North Dakota

Executive Order 2007-08 (June 29, 2007)

Executive Order 2007-09 (July 5, 2007)

Executive Order 2007-10 (July 18, 2007)

Executive Order 2007-12 (Aug. 20, 2007)



— State of —
North Dakota
Office of the Governor

John Hoeven
Governor

Executive Order 2007-08

WHEREAS, the people of North Dakota are faced with extremely low inventories and outages of petroleum products, particularly gasoline supplies, caused by disruptions in refinery production; and

WHEREAS, drivers of delivery trucks are required to wait for several hours at alternative terminals across the state of North Dakota for loading, which limits their ability to transport product; and

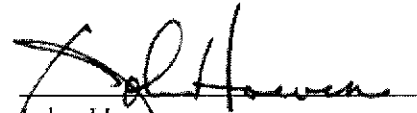
WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the state to assist the people of North Dakota in addressing the emergencies, disasters, and other hardships that may face the state and its citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Hoeven, Governor of North Dakota, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article V, Section 1 of the North Dakota Constitution and North Dakota Century Code § 37-17.1, do hereby declare that a state of emergency exists in North Dakota that requires relief from North Dakota Century Code § 39-32-02 pertaining to hours of service for drivers of commercial motor vehicles while transporting heating and motor fuels to customers.

This order is issued on the foregoing bases and on the following conditions:

1. Nothing in this order shall be construed to relieve Carriers operating under this order from regulations pertaining to qualifications of drivers, driving of commercial motor vehicles, or parts and accessories necessary for the safe operation of vehicles.
2. Carriers, while under this order, shall not require or allow fatigued drivers to operate a motor vehicle. A driver who informs a carrier that she/he needs immediate rest shall be given at least ten consecutive hours before the driver is required to return to service.
3. This order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect for the duration of the emergency or July 7, 2007, whichever is less.

Executed at Bismarck, North Dakota, this 29th day of June 2007.



John Hoeven
Governor

ATTEST:



Secretary of State

Deputy



State of
North Dakota

Office of the Governor

John Hoeven
Governor

Executive Order 2007-09

WHEREAS, the people in North Dakota and the tri-state region continue to face extremely low inventories and outages of petroleum products, particularly gasoline supplies, caused by disruptions in refinery production due to refinery slowdowns and weather related shutdowns; and

WHEREAS, drivers of delivery trucks are required to wait for several hours at alternative terminals across the tri-state region for loading, which limits their ability to transport product; and

WHEREAS, the states of Minnesota and South Dakota have declared emergencies and waived the hours of service requirements until July 19, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration has recognized North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota's emergency waivers and exempted interstate hours of service requirements; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the state to assist the people of North Dakota in addressing the emergencies, disasters, and other hardships that may face the state and its citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Hoeven, Governor of North Dakota, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article V, Section 1 of the North Dakota Constitution and North Dakota Century Code § 37-17.1, do hereby declare that a state of emergency exists in North Dakota that requires relief from North Dakota Century Code § 39-32-02 pertaining to hours of service for drivers of commercial motor vehicles while transporting heating and motor fuels to customers.

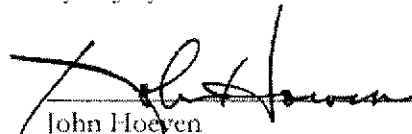
This order is issued on the foregoing bases and on the following conditions:

1. Nothing in this order shall be construed to relieve Carriers operating under this order from regulations pertaining to qualifications of drivers, driving of commercial motor vehicles, or parts and accessories necessary for the safe operation of vehicles.
2. Carriers, while under this order, shall not require or allow fatigued drivers to operate a motor vehicle. A driver who informs a carrier that she/he needs immediate rest shall be given at least ten consecutive hours before the driver is required to return to service.

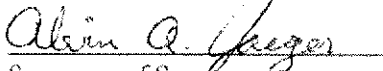
500 E Boulevard Ave
Bismarck, ND 58505-0001
Phone: 701.328.2200
Fax: 701.328.2205
www.nd.gov

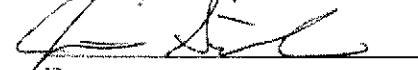
3. This order shall extend Executive Order 2007-08 and is effective immediately and shall remain in effect for the duration of the emergency or until 12:01 a.m. CDT July 19, 2007, whichever is less.

Executed at Bismarck, North Dakota, this 5th day of July 2007.


John Hoeven
Governor

ATTEST:


Secretary of State


Deputy



State of
North Dakota
Office of the Governor
John Hoeven
Governor

Executive Order 2007-10

WHEREAS, the people in North Dakota and the Midwest region continue to face extremely low inventories and outages of petroleum products, particularly gasoline supplies, caused by disruptions in refinery production due to refinery slowdowns and weather related shutdowns; and

WHEREAS, drivers of delivery trucks are required to wait for several hours at alternative terminals across the region for loading, which limits their ability to transport product; and

WHEREAS, several states have declared emergencies and waived the hours of service requirements and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has recognized an emergency exists; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the state to assist the people of North Dakota in addressing the emergencies, disasters, and other hardships that may face the state and its citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Hoeven, Governor of North Dakota, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article V, Section 1 of the North Dakota Constitution and North Dakota Century Code § 37-17.1, do hereby declare that a state of emergency exists in North Dakota that requires relief from North Dakota Century Code § 39-32-02 and 49 CFR § 395.3 pertaining to hours of service for drivers of commercial motor vehicles while transporting heating and motor fuels to customers.

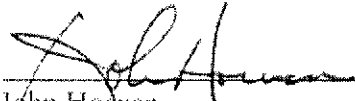
This order is issued on the foregoing bases and on the following conditions:

1. Nothing in this order shall be construed to relieve Carriers operating under this order from regulations pertaining to qualifications of drivers, driving of commercial motor vehicles, or parts and accessories necessary for the safe operation of vehicles.
2. Carriers, while under this order, shall not require or allow fatigued drivers to operate a motor vehicle. A driver who informs a carrier that she/he needs immediate rest shall be given at least ten consecutive hours before the driver is required to return to service.

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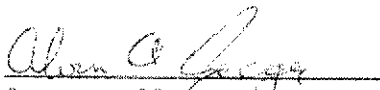
3. This Order supersedes and replaces Executive Order 2007-09 and is effective at 12:01 a.m. CDT on July 19, 2007, and shall remain in effect for the duration of the emergency or until 12:01 a.m. CDT July 28, 2007, whichever is less.

Executed at Bismarck, North Dakota, this 18th day of July 2007.

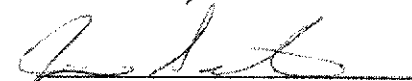


John Hoeven
Governor

ATTEST:



Secretary of State



Deputy



— State of —
North Dakota
Office of the Governor

John Hoeven
Governor

Executive Order 2007-12

WHEREAS, the people in North Dakota are facing extremely low inventories and outages of petroleum products, particularly gasoline and diesel supplies, caused by the temporary reduction of production as a result of maintenance to several refineries and other natural disasters coupled with the increase demand due to the harvest season; and

WHEREAS, drivers of delivery trucks are required to wait for several hours at alternative terminals across state for loading, which limits their ability to transport product; and

WHEREAS, the states of Nebraska and South Dakota have declared emergencies and waived the hours of service requirements until September 9, 2007; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the state to assist the people of North Dakota in addressing the emergencies, disasters, and other hardships that may face the state and its citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Hoeven, Governor of North Dakota, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article V, Section 1 of the North Dakota Constitution and North Dakota Century Code § 37-17.1, do hereby declare that a state of emergency exists in North Dakota that requires relief from North Dakota Century Code § 39-32-02 pertaining to hours of service for drivers of commercial motor vehicles while transporting fuels to customers.

This order is issued on the foregoing bases and on the following conditions:

1. Nothing in this order shall be construed to relieve Carriers operating under this order from regulations pertaining to qualifications of drivers, driving of commercial motor vehicles, or parts and accessories necessary for the safe operation of vehicles.
2. Carriers, while under this order, shall not require or allow fatigued drivers to operate a motor vehicle. A driver who informs a carrier that she/he needs immediate rest shall be given at least ten consecutive hours before the driver is required to return to service.


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Executive Order 2007-12

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This order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect for the duration of the emergency or until 12:01 a.m. CDT September 9, 2007, whichever is less.

Executed at Bismarck, North Dakota, this 20 day of August 2007.



John Hoeven
Governor

ATTEST:



Secretary of State

Deputy

Nebraska

Richard Piersol, *Governor Extends Waiver for Fuel Haulers*,
Lincoln J. Star, Aug. 31, 2007

Governor extends waiver for fuel haulers

By RICHARD PIERSOL / Lincoln Journal Star
Friday, Aug 31, 2007 - 12:15:46 am CDT

The whereases all add up to continued tight supplies of gasoline and diesel fuel, forcing longer trips to fuel terminals farther away.

So Gov. Dave Heineman on Thursday extended until Oct. 10 his waiver issued earlier this summer on hours of service for commercial truck drivers carrying motor fuel.

The extra service hours allow truckers to fetch and deliver fuel from farther away, in a regional fuel market bottleneck that some are calling the worst since the Arab oil embargo of the 1970s.

In North Dakota, the Environmental Protection Agency waived summer gas standards so the state could import gasoline from Canada.

Supply shortages continued to "run rampant" in many pockets of the Midwest this week, with some North Dakota stations out of gasoline just ahead of the last major driving weekend of the year, reported the Oil Price Information Service.

"There is a major shortage going on right now," said Mike Rud, president of the North Dakota Petroleum Marketers Association.

The supply squeeze shows little let-up in South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota, sources told the information service.

Meanwhile, gas prices in other parts of the United States have been easing, but problems at refineries that serve the upper Midwest have conspired to keep gasoline prices higher here.

No retail stores in Nebraska have reported being out of gasoline, according to AAA spokeswoman Rose White, quoting Tim Keigher, of the Nebraska Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association, which represents retailers. Keigher could not be reached for comment.

But in North Dakota, a lot of unbranded retailers cannot get fuel, Rud told the Oil Price Information Service.

For months, North Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska marketers have operated under the hours of service waivers on truckers Heineman extended on Thursday. Safety is the reason for the restrictions.

Rud said not since the oil embargo of the 1970s have supplies been so tight in the region.

Brian Johnson, director of finance at Casey's General Stores, wasn't sure he'd go that far.

Then he talked to Debbie Grimes, who's been buying gas for Casey's for 30 years and agrees with Rud.

Still, things are actually looking up from circumstances in July, Johnson said.

"It's been challenging," he said. "We have our own fleet of trucks. That gives us more flexibility than the little guy."

In July, it was not uncommon for any of Nebraska's nine fuel terminals, except

Omaha, to be out of gasoline for a week at a time, Johnson said.

Magellan, a pipeline company that has terminals in Omaha and Lincoln, apparently chose to make Omaha its hub, Johnson said, so when other terminals were empty there would be lines five hours long at the Omaha terminal.

The terminal in Geneva rationed 20 loads a day during July, according to Johnson.

"That's a pretty severe ration," he said.

Casey's, which has 98 stores in Nebraska, adapted by driving its trucks a lot farther.

Normally, Casey's delivers 70 to 75 percent of its own gasoline, but it dipped down to 50 percent, Johnson said

"We were driving so far we had to contract out," he said.

Those contract carriers were accommodating their biggest customers, Johnson said, so he repeated his sympathy for "the little guy."

As things stood Thursday, no terminal in Nebraska was likely to be out of fuel for more than a day or two, according to Johnson.

Every year has spots when gas is unavailable somewhere, Johnson said.

But he noted that Grimes, the Casey's gas buyer, confirmed the severity of this year: the most challenging summer in her 30 years in the business.

Reach Richard Piersol at 473-7241 or at dpiersol@journalstar.com.

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