

**ECAN Big Dogs Event Wraps Up on a High Note**

This year’s Big Dogs Event delivered outstanding energy, meaningful connections, and memorable experiences from start to finish.

The Exchange, introduced for the first time, was a fast-paced networking event that created valuable one-on-one conversations and fresh opportunities for attendees to connect in an engaging new format. Bowling brought plenty of friendly competition and laughter, while the golf tournament offered a relaxed setting to continue conversations and strengthen partnerships on the course.

Thank you to everyone who attended, participated, and supported the Big Dogs Event. Your enthusiasm made this year’s gathering a tremendous success, and we look forward to building on that momentum next year.



The following information provided by:  
**EMA-Energy Marketers of America**



**Inside the Beltway Update**

Lawmakers are currently navigating various hurdles as they work toward the next surface transportation reauthorization before the September 30 deadline. While Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO) has scheduled a House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee markup for April 29, Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) expressed skepticism about meeting that date. Funding levels remain a point of discussion; Graves is primarily targeting between \$500 billion and \$550 billion, though he has indicated openness to a top line exceeding \$600 billion.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, leaders of the Environment and Public Works Committee have pushed their markup goal to this summer as they work to bridge gaps in their negotiations. The legislative process also involves several contentious proposals regarding revenue and consumer costs. Rep. Larsen has voiced support for levying fees on electric vehicles and hybrids, an idea that may be included in the upcoming bill after being excluded from previous Republican efforts. Additionally, amid the ongoing war with Iran, Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) has proposed a gas tax holiday to reduce pump prices by up to 18 cents per gallon. While Hawley criticizes Congress for legislative inaction on affordability, the gas tax suspension remains unpopular with the majority of his Republican colleagues, despite garnering support from some Democrats. Despite these disagreements, key figures like Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) are still aiming to finalize the legislation by late September to avoid a long-term extension of existing authorities.

The Trump Administration plans to reschedule marijuana from Schedule I to Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act, roughly four months after President Trump issued an executive order to expedite the change. Potential actions from the Administration could include a Department of Justice (DOJ) announcement that states will manage marijuana licenses or a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) announcement regarding a new administrative hearing. The White House has stated that these efforts are intended to increase medical marijuana research and bridge the gap between current usage and scientific

knowledge. Although rescheduling would not federally legalize cannabis, it would provide a major financial boost to state-licensed businesses by allowing them to take federal tax deductions currently blocked by IRS code 280E. The initiative is currently being overseen by Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, following the departure of Pam Bondi, who had a history of opposing cannabis reform. The process has been hampered by legal complications, including a previously canceled hearing that involved allegations of agency bias and improper communications with anti-rescheduling groups.

The House recently passed the Fire Improvement and Reforming Exceptional Events (FIRE) Act ([H.R. 6387](#)), a legislative effort designed to reform how the Clean Air Act handles wildfire-related emissions. Led by Rep. Gabe Evans (R-CO), the bill seeks to ensure that states and manufacturers are not penalized for smoke and emissions resulting from wildfires and other "exceptional events" beyond their control. Supporters argue that existing regulations are restrictive and inconsistent, often punishing states for taking proactive measures to improve air quality and manage forests. The legislation specifically addresses a regulatory gap where prescribed burns, an essential tool for reducing wildfire risks, are treated the same as industrial factory emissions when evaluating compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Beyond simplifying regulations, the FIRE Act updates Section 319(b) of the Clean Air Act to strengthen coordination between states and the EPA, ensuring that determinations for exceptional events are timely and transparent.

The House has approved the Reliable Federal Infrastructure Act ([H.R. 4690](#)) which EMA supports. The bill aims to repeal and nullify the revised federal building energy efficiency performance standards originally established under the Energy Conservation and Production Act. By removing these standards, the legislation effectively eliminates their implementation and ensures they no longer have any legal force. To support this transition, the Act includes conforming amendments to the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, stripping away references to these repealed benchmarks in sections concerning high-performance and green building requirements. Ultimately, these legislative changes are intended to align the federal building standards framework with the current legal structure by discarding outdated or superseded performance metrics.

### **EMA to Congress: Modernize the Jones Act!**

EMA along with a coalition of organizations representing energy, agriculture, and food supply chains has written to Congressional leadership to support a recent 60-day partial waiver of the Jones Act and to advocate for permanent reform and modernization of the law. The Jones Act (Merchant Marine Act of 1920) is a federal statute requiring that all goods transported by water between U.S. ports be carried on ships that are U.S.-built, U.S.-owned, and U.S.-crewed. The coalition argues that the frequent necessity of emergency waivers, undermines the statute. They contend that a law requiring frequent suspension during economic stress is antiquated and structurally flawed, urging Congress to end the "cycle of waive-and-forget." The letter highlights significant economic and logistical constraints caused by the current Jones Act requirements, noting that shipping costs are approximately three times higher than equivalent foreign-flagged services.

To address these systemic issues, the coalition urges Congress to conduct hearings on the national security and consumer implications of the Jones act and to modernize vessel eligibility requirements, specifically the domestic-build mandate. They also propose exploring permanent exemptions or streamlined waivers for critical commodities, such as energy products and agricultural inputs. Finally, they request that Congress evaluate existing reform proposals, such as the Open America's Waters Act ([H.R. 3940](#) / [S. 2043](#)), asserting that the law as written is not working for the American economy and requires a bipartisan effort to strengthen domestic supply chains.

### **White House Extends Jones Act Waiver Through Mid-August**

**Friday, April 24, 2026** – The White House today extended its Jones Act waiver by 90 days, keeping foreign-flagged tankers eligible to move crude, fuels, and fertilizer between U.S. ports through mid-August. The waiver, originally issued in March in response to Iran-war-related global shipping disruptions affecting roughly 13 million barrels per day of crude and products, was set to expire May 17. It continues to cover 659 product categories and gives refiners a wider booking window for July and August cargoes.

For EMA members, the principal near-term effect is faster movement of Gulf Coast crude to East Coast refiners, which should support supply availability as refiners position inventories for peak summer demand. Phillips 66 has already shipped Bakken crude from Beaumont to its 185,000-barrel-per-day Trainer, Pennsylvania refinery aboard a Malta-flagged tanker under President Trump's waiver.

The Administration has paired the extension with fuel specification waivers and limited Russian-crude sanctions relief aimed at keeping physical barrels moving. EMA will continue monitoring the waiver and related supply-chain actions and will update members as developments warrant.

### **Amendment Introduced to Delay the "Hemp Ban"**

As you know, the federal government passed a budget deal at the end of 2025, which included the re-prohibition of hemp and hemp-derived products. To be clear, the Big Beautiful Bill, or BBB, does not ban hemp; specifically, it bans hemp derived cannabinoid products with over 0.4 milligrams of THC per container. This effectively bans close to 100% of the hemp derived cannabinoid products currently on the market. The ban takes effect on November 12, 2026.

This week, Rep. James Comer (R-KY), Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, filed an amendment to the 2026 Farm Bill, formally known as the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 (H.R. 7567) to delay implementation of the "hemp ban" for one year to November 2027. Other Republican lawmakers have also submitted hemp related amendments, including Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY) and Rep. Jim Baird (R-IN), but these have since been withdrawn. Amendments to the Farm Bill, including Rep. Comer's, are expected to be considered next week by the House Rules Committee.



### **Jeff Lykins to receive 2026 Distinguished Service Award from Energy Marketers of America**

This week, the Energy Marketers of America (EMA) proudly announced that Jeff Lykins, past EMA Chairman and a widely respected leader in the energy distribution industry, has been selected as the recipient of the 2026 Distinguished Service Award (DSA)—EMA's highest individual honor.

"I'm deeply honored to receive this award," said Lykins. "After a lifetime of work serving in energy marketing, I couldn't be more thrilled to be recognized by my peers for helping to make a difference in our industry."

EMA President Rob Underwood describes Jeff as a respected and effective leader who is highly deserving of this award.

"Jeff grew up in a marketer family and understands this business at every level," said Underwood. "He succeeded in expanding the Lykins business in wholesale, retail, and heating oil—and contributed significantly to the creation of the National Oilheat Research Alliance (NORA), as well as serving with distinction as EMA Chairman."

Jeff Lykins served as President and CEO of Lykins Energy Solutions, a third-generation family company founded in 1948. Headquartered in Milford, Ohio, Lykins employed more than 500 people, generated over \$1 billion in annual sales, and supplied over 160 independent dealers. The company marketed Marathon, BP, Shell, and Gulf and offered branded and wholesale fuels, petroleum transportation, home heating oil, propane, lubricants, commercial fleet fueling, card locks, wet hosing, pipeline sales, electricity, and natural gas—serving customers across 15 states and more than 25,000 residential accounts.

In 2014, the company rebranded from Lykins Oil Co. to Lykins Energy Solutions and became one of Ohio's 100 largest privately held companies and a top 10 privately held firm in the greater Cincinnati area. Under his leadership, the company diversified its offerings and maintained a strong community focus, supporting CASA for Clermont Kids (raising over \$1 million through an annual golf outing), the Guy B. and Mabel Lykins Scholarship, Boys & Girls Clubs, food pantries, and anti-child abuse initiatives. Jeff currently serves on the boards of Little Fork Advocacy Center and Valley View.

Jeff is active in industry leadership, serving as Special Advisor to the Executive Committee of the Kentucky Petroleum Marketers Association (KPMA) and on its Board of Directors. His award is especially fitting this year as KPMA celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026.

In addition to leading in Kentucky, Jeff served on the Board of Directors and was a past chairman of the Ohio Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association, known today as the Ohio Energy & Convenience Association (OECA). He held multiple leadership roles with the Energy Marketers of America—including chairman, vice chairman, and treasurer—and chaired the Petroleum Marketers Educational Foundation. He chaired the BP Amoco Marketers Association Board and its Strategic Advisory Group, and served on the Brands, Executive, and Nominating committees.

Jeff's contributions extend well beyond his professional career as he deeply supported local civic and economic development in Ohio. He served as president of the Milford/Miami Township Chamber of Commerce, chaired chamber committees on governmental affairs and economic development, and led Frontier Days. He was president of the Clermont County Community Improvement Corporation, served on the Economic Development Council of Clermont County and the Clermont County Transportation Improvement District, and served as a Milford city councilman and vice mayor.

Jeff also served on the boards of the National Bank & Trust (Wilmington), the Greater Cincinnati Autism Society, the Clermont County Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Andy & Jordan Dalton Foundation executive board, and the Society of Independent Gasoline Marketers.

Jeff attended the University of Cincinnati. In retirement he lives in California, Ohio, spends time at Norris Lake and at his new home in The Villages, Florida, remains active in Rotary, and is a private pilot. He has two children, Andrea and DJ, and one grandchild, Juniper. He resides in Cincinnati "on the river" with his partner Linda and his dog, Hornblower.

The selection committee for this prestigious award included:

- Bruce Spiridonoff, Tevis Energy, Westminster, Maryland (DSA Chair)
- Brad Longcake, Executive Director, Montana Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association (Helena, Montana)
- Grady Gaubert (past DSA Recipient)
- Brian Lohman, ASAP Energy, Weatherford, Oklahoma (committee chair)
- Glenn Hasken, Molo Companies, Dubuque, Iowa (EMA Chair)
- Jim Lipscomb, Lipscomb Oil Company, Greenville, Mississippi (past EMA chairman)

The 2026 EMA Distinguished Service Award is a fitting tribute to a career defined by integrity, innovation, and enduring service to the energy marketing industry.

### **EMA Washington Conference and Day on the Hill – May 13-15, 2026: Please Make Your Hotel Reservation and Register Now**

EMA's annual Washington Conference and Day on the Hill will be held in Washington, DC from May 13-15 at [The Mayflower Hotel](#). Our industry continues to have many important legislative and regulatory issues to discuss and the Day on the Hill

remains the primary focus of this conference for you to meet with your members of Congress and network with other marketers from across the country!

Hotel reservations will close April 30 at 6:00 pm Eastern or when the room block is sold out. Tuesday night (Sold out), Wednesday night (13 available), and Thursday night (Sold out). **If we sell out, please refer to Additional Hotel Information #3.**

Registrations must be received by April 30 to be included in our hotel guarantee.

[Click here to Register and Book your Hotel Room for EMA's DC Conference and Day on the Hill](#)

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### Weekend Reads

[ASTM approves updated heating oil specification to include biodiesel blends up to B50](#)

[Don't Mistake Easing Oil Prices for Calm, Analyst Warns | Rigzone](#)

[Make America AI-Ready | U.S. Department of Labor](#)

[Phillips 66, Kinder Morgan Advance Texas to Arizona Pipeline Project | Rigzone](#)

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### Federated Insurance Employment Practices Network HR Question of the Month

Federated Insurance's HR Question of the Month focuses on employment-related practices liability issues. This month's question is: **Bonuses and the FMLA**. We are confused about how bonuses work for employees who take leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Can an employee's FMLA leave be counted against them for their bonus?



As a general matter, employers must be cautious when denying any right to an employee who takes FMLA leave. Employers are prohibited from discriminating or retaliating against an employee or prospective employee for having exercised or attempted to exercise any FMLA right. Employers may not use an employee's request for or use of FMLA leave as a negative factor in employment actions, such as hiring, promotions or disciplinary actions.

- That said, an employer may deny a bonus that is based upon achieving a goal, such as hours worked, products sold or perfect attendance, to an employee who takes FMLA leave (and thus does not achieve the goal) as long as it treats employees taking FMLA leave the same as employees taking non-FMLA leave. For example, if an employer does not deny a perfect attendance bonus to employees using vacation leave, the employer may not deny the bonus to an employee who used vacation leave for an FMLA-qualifying reason.

Additional laws may apply to an employee's situation, such as other federal, state and/or local laws. Employers are advised to work with local counsel to ensure they comply with all applicable legal requirements. For additional information or to discuss this in further detail, please contact your [Federated](#) regional representative or EMA's National Account Executive [Jack West](#) at [262.719.7750](tel:262.719.7750) for any additional information or risk management questions.

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The **WPMA NEWS** currently serves EIGHT independent petroleum and convenience store associations.

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UPMRA [Golf Tournament](#)



OFA Conference [Registration](#)



IPM&CSA Convention [Registration](#)

## PLEASE NOTE UPCOMING DATES FOR EVENTS

April 28, 2026 - IPM&CSA (Idaho) Ridgecrest PAC Golf Tournament, Nampa, ID  
May 18, 2026 - HEMA (Hawaii) Golf Tournament, Oahu Country Club, Honolulu, HI  
June 2-3, 2026 MPMCSA (Montana) Convention, Fairmont Resort, Fairmont, MT  
June 15-17, 2026 WOMA (Washington) Convention, Suncadia Resort, Cle Elum, WA  
June 17, 2026 UPMRA (Utah) Golf Tournament, Bountiful Ridge Course, Bountiful, UT  
July 12-14, 2026 OFA (Oregon) Conference, Sunriver Resort, Sunriver, OR  
Aug 5-7, 2026 IPM&CSA (Idaho) Convention, Coeur d'Alene Resort, Coeur d'Alene, ID  
Aug 18-19, 2026 NMPMA (New Mexico) Convention, Sandia Resort, Albuquerque, NM  
October 27-29, 2026 UPMRA (Utah) Convention, Hilton Garden Inn, St. George, UT  
February 16-18, 2027 WPMAEXPO, MGM Grand, Las Vegas, NV

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**Petro Pete:** Should I plant flowers in April? May as well!

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