

essentially all refiners to include this process in their options for 2010. Based on information received from Linde, we estimate that this technology could reduce the cost of meeting the 15 ppm cap for many refiners by 40 percent.

Finally, Unipure Corporation is developing a desulfurization process which oxidizes the sulfur atom in diesel fuel molecules, facilitating its removal. This process operates at low temperatures and ambient pressure, so it avoids the need for costly, thick walled, pressure vessels and compressors. It also consumes no hydrogen. Thus, it could be particularly advantageous for refiners who lack an inexpensive supply of hydrogen (*e.g.*, isolated or smaller refineries who cannot construct a world scale hydrogen plant based on inexpensive natural gas). However, the oxidant is very powerful, so specialized, oxidation resistant materials are needed. Unipure has demonstrated its process at the pilot plant level, but has yet to build a commercial sized demonstration unit. However, time still remains for this to be done before refiners need to make final decisions for their 2010 compliance plans. Thus, while more uncertain than the other two advanced processes, the Unipure oxidation process could be selected by a number of refiners to meet the 2010 15 ppm cap. Based on inputs from Unipure, we estimate that their process could reduce the cost of meeting the 15 ppm cap for roughly one-fourth of all refineries by 25–35 percent.

The savings associated with each technology varies with the size, location and complexity of the refinery. However, on average the Linde process appears to have the potential reduce the cost of desulfurizing 500 ppm diesel fuel to 15 ppm by 35–40 percent. The savings associated with the Phillips and Unipure processes appear to be more refinery specific. For about 25 refineries, the Phillips process appears to have the potential to reduce these desulfurization costs by 20–40 percent. The primary advantage of the Unipure process is its lower capital costs. For about 30 refineries, the Unipure process appears to have the potential to reduce the capital investment related to produce 15 ppm fuel from 500 ppm diesel fuel by an average of 40 percent.

8. Availability of Leadtime To Meet the 2010 15 ppm Sulfur Cap

If we promulgate this proposal one year from today, this would provide refiners and importers with more than six years before they would have to begin complying with the 15 ppm cap for nonroad diesel fuel on June 1, 2010. Our leadtime analysis, which is

presented in the draft RIA, projects that 30–39 months are typically needed to design and construct a diesel fuel hydrotreater.²⁶² Thus, refiners would have about 3 years before they would have to begin detailed design and construction. This would allow them time to observe the performance of the hydrotreaters being used to produce 15 ppm highway diesel fuel for at least one year. While not a full catalyst cycle, any unusual degradation in catalyst performance over time should be apparent within the first year. Thus, we project that the 2010 start date would allow refiners to be quite certain that the designs they select in mid-2007 will perform adequately in 2010.

In addition, we expect that most of the advanced technologies will be demonstrated on a commercial scale by the end of 2004. Thus, refiners would have at least two and a half years to observe the performance of these technologies before having to select a technology to meet the 2010 15 ppm cap. This should be more than adequate to fully access the costs and capabilities of these technologies for all but the most cautious refiners.

9. Feasibility of Distributing Nonroad, Locomotive and Marine Diesel Fuels That Meet the Proposed Sulfur Standards

There are two considerations with respect to the feasibility of distributing non-highway diesel fuels meeting the proposed sulfur standards. The first pertains to whether sulfur contamination can be adequately managed throughout the distribution system so that fuel delivered to the end-user does not exceed the specified maximum sulfur concentration. The second pertains to the physical limitations of the system to accommodate any additional segregation of product grades.

a. Limiting Sulfur Contamination

With respect to limiting sulfur contamination during distribution, the physical hardware and distribution practices for non-highway diesel fuel do not differ significantly from those for highway diesel fuel. Therefore, we do not anticipate any new issues with respect to limiting sulfur contamination during the distribution of non-highway fuel that would not have already been accounted for in distributing highway diesel fuel. Highway diesel fuel has been required to meet a 500 ppm sulfur standard since 1993. Thus, we expect that limiting contamination during the

distribution of 500 ppm non-highway diesel engine fuel can be readily accomplished by industry.

In the highway diesel rule, EPA acknowledged that meeting a 15 ppm sulfur specification would pose a substantial new challenge to the distribution system. Refiners, pipelines and terminals would have to pay careful attention to and eliminate any potential sources of contamination in the system (*e.g.*, tank bottoms, deal legs in pipelines, leaking valves, interface cuts, etc.) In addition, bulk plant operators and delivery truck operators would have to carefully observe recommended industry practices to limit contamination, including practices as simple as cleaning out transfer hoses, proper sequencing of fuel deliveries, and parking on a level surface. Due to the need to prepare for compliance with the highway diesel program, we anticipate that issues related to limiting sulfur contamination during the distribution of 15 ppm nonroad diesel fuel will be resolved well in advance of the proposed 2010 implementation date for nonroad fuel. We are not aware of any additional issues that might be raised unique to nonroad fuel. If anything we anticipate limiting contamination will become easier as batch sizes are allowed to increase and potential sources of contamination decrease. We request comment on whether there are unique considerations regarding the transition to a 15 ppm standard for nonroad diesel fuel and what actions we should take beyond those that are already underway in preparation for the 15 ppm highway diesel program.

b. Potential Need for Additional Product Segregation

As discussed in sub-section B, we have designed the proposed program to minimize the need for additional product segregation and the associated feasibility and cost issues associated with it. This proposal would allow for the fungible distribution of 500 ppm highway and 500 ppm NRLM diesel fuel in 2007, and 15 ppm highway and 15 ppm nonroad diesel fuel in 2010, up until the point where NRLM or nonroad fuel must be dyed for IRS excise tax purposes. Heating oil would be required to be segregated as a separate pool beginning in 2007 through the use of a new marker, and locomotive and marine fuel by use of the same marker beginning in 2010. With this program design, we believe we have eliminated any potential feasibility issues associated with the need for product segregation. This is not to say that steps will not have to be taken. We have

²⁶² "Highway Diesel Progress Review," USEPA, EPA420-R-02-016, June 2002.