Bad Fuel Highlights Need for Testing in Ohio
Reynolds Wants Permissive Authority Given to Auditors

HAMILTON, Ohio – It’s been more than 11 years since the state legislature provided the director of agriculture the authority to implement a uniform motor fuel quality testing program in Ohio.

The result: In all that time there has not been one quality fuel test conducted in Butler County by the department of agriculture.

That probably doesn’t sit well with at least four drivers who were left stranded after pumping water tainted fuel into their tanks at the Madison Food Mart Shell station at 2289 Middletown Eaton Road on Wednesday. One of those four, a U.S. Postal Service letter carrier, didn’t even make it to the road before the postal vehicle broke down at the station.

“How many more vehicles are we going to see damaged because of no action on fuel quality testing in this state,” said Auditor Reynolds. “If the department of agriculture is not going to do the job, give local county auditors the authority to test and we’ll reduce the number of vehicles damaged.”

In this most recent incident, the damage was so pronounced that local police made the station bag their pumps. A Butler County Auditor Weights and Measures inspector responded and noticed water streaming into the ground tank because the proper cap was missing.

The Auditor’s Office receives complaints every year about vehicles shutting down or running poorly after purchasing fuel at Butler County gas stations. “Just a few months ago, we found roughly 3 feet of water and sediment mixed in with the fuel in a fuel tank at a Sunoco in West Chester,” said Auditor Reynolds.

It’s apparent the leadership at the State Agriculture department are taking a see nothing, do nothing approach. Unfortunately, their approach is bad news for Ohio gas consumers,” said Reynolds.

Since there has been no action toward fuel quality testing by the department of agriculture since HB 67 was codified as ORC 1327.70 in 2007, Reynolds has concentrated recent efforts on new legislation that would grant county auditors the permissive authority to test motor fuel for octane, water and sediment.
“I’ve spoken to several new state representatives and all have expressed interest in addressing real fuel quality testing. I don’t know how a single state representative can support a proposed gas tax increase without an accompanying measure that provides assurances on fuel quality for Ohio’s gas consumers. I’m hopeful new legislation will be introduced soon.” said Reynolds.