

U.S. Denies Eying Gas Rationing

7/4/73
By Paul Hodge

Washington Post Staff Writer

Wartime-type rationing of gasoline to motorists is not being considered as a method of dealing with the current shortage, administration officials said yesterday.

William E. Simon, deputy secretary of the Treasury and chairman of the President's oil policy committee, issued the statement to reassure the public that "reports that the government has printed rationing stamps or cards are not true."

A Dallas newspaper reported yesterday that a program for compulsory rationing of all fuels, including gasoline, had been presented to the White House.

The report came as two Ohio oil company officials and Sen. William Saxbe (R-Ohio) said that rationing was likely within the next year or two if the gas crisis continues.

The American Automobile Association announced yesterday, however, that this summer's gasoline shortage appears to be easing somewhat and that motorists should have no trouble getting gas over the July 4 holiday, at least along the nation's major travel routes—where about 75 per cent of the service stations will be open.

The AAA's office here reported that a spot survey of 73 Washington-area stations found that about 50 per cent of them plan to remain open today, slightly more than were open last Sunday.

For two weeks prior to Sunday AAA national surveys had showed Washington as the area in the nation hardest hit by the shortage. An AAA survey here Sunday, June 24 found 77 per cent of the area's stations closed—and 86 per cent in suburban Maryland. Normally less than 35 per cent of the approximately 1,600

See GASOLINE, A13, Col. 4

U.S. Denies Eying Gas Rationing

GASOLINE, From A1

Washington-area service stations are closed on Sundays.

The gasoline situation has improved, the AAA believes, largely because several major oil companies have announced they are increasing supplies to their stations.

Exxon, the nation's largest oil company and the fourth biggest seller of gasoline, announced June 22 it was increasing its supply to dealers by 10 per cent in July and August and announced yesterday it was increasing that amount by another 10 per cent.

Two Washington-area Exxon stations that had planned to close today to conserve their gasoline supplies called the AAA later yesterday to say they will be open now because of the latest Exxon announcement.

Texaco, Gulf and Atlantic Richfield (Arco) announced last week that they too were now able to supply more gasoline to their service stations. All said improved refinery operations and increased oil imports had made the increases possible.

Numerous other oil companies are still continuing to limit supplies to their dealers, however, including Shell, Sun Oil (Sunoco), BP, American Oil (Amoco) and Phillips Petroleum.

The national gasoline shortage began to be felt by motorists this spring as oil companies reduced or ended shipments to independent stations and in May many told their own brand stations they could have no more than they got each month last year. Oil companies said consumption had jumped this year by 7 per cent, causing shortages because their refineries were programmed for only a 4 per cent growth in consumption.

The limiting of supplies to national brand stations began after the Nixon administration announced "voluntary" guidelines May 10, under which oil companies would sell customers the same amount of gasoline they got last year.