



# NEWS RELEASE

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HART Energy Publishing LP, 1616 S. Voss, Suite 1000, Houston, Texas 77057 USA • (1) 713.260.6400 • Fax (1) 713.840.8585

Press Contact: Florence Kosmala  
Director of Marketing  
HART Energy Consulting  
[fkosmala@hartenergy.com](mailto:fkosmala@hartenergy.com)

## **IFQC Ranks Top 100 Countries by Gasoline Benzene Standards; South Korea Ranks First**

HOUSTON (Feb. 25, 2010) – The *International Fuel Quality Center (IFQC)* has ranked the top 100 countries based on gasoline benzene content standards. South Korea came in first with the earliest nationwide implementation of the lowest benzene limit – 0.7 vol% since January 2009, down from 1 vol%. Colombia followed in second and Canada was third.

Benzene is found naturally in crude oil and thus passes into refined products, including transportation fuels. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies benzene as a Group A known human carcinogen. Controlling benzene levels in gasoline is the most direct way to limit evaporative and exhaust emissions of benzene from vehicles.

“It is delightful to see that the first 50 countries in the ranking have a limit of 1 vol% or less. The improvements in Asia and Latin America are very encouraging and show that the world is making efforts to improve fuel quality and reduce emissions,” said Liisa Kiuru, executive director, *IFQC*.

European countries ranked high (Luxembourg in fourth, Belgium in fifth and nine others tied for sixth), as did with several Asian countries, including Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan, tied at 19<sup>th</sup> with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The U.S. ranked 73<sup>rd</sup>, primarily because these rankings are based on national maximum allowance standards – U.S. standards have not been updated since 1997. California would have actually ranked first if it was a country – its state limit is 0.7 vol%. The U.S. is now in the process of implementing tighter limits under the Mobile Source Air Toxics–2 (MSAT 2) rule, which will reduce benzene levels in gasoline to an annual average of 0.62 vol% beginning in 2011 with a cap of 1.3 vol%. U.S. reformulated gasoline (RFG) has a lower limit, requiring an annual average of 0.95 vol%.

“We at Hart recognize the key role that government, refining and automakers have played in reducing benzene content in gasoline. Airborne toxics have long been a key global concern in major

urban centers for many decades. It is gratifying to see the steady progress being made in reducing benzene content in fuel and related air toxics emissions,” said Frederick L. Potter, executive vice president, Hart Energy Publishing.

The complete ranking is available on *IFQC's* Web site (<http://www.ifqc.org>).

HART Energy Consulting is a division of HART Energy Publishing, LP, one of the world's largest energy industry publishers, with a diverse array of informational products for the worldwide energy industry. Multi-client consulting services include the *International Fuel Quality Center*, the *Global Biofuels Center* and an annual *Crude, Refining & Clean Transportation Fuel Outlook to 2030*. Headquartered in Houston, with offices in New York, London, Washington, D.C., Brussels, Singapore and Rio de Janeiro, HART Energy Publishing's market-leading publications include *Oil and Gas Investor*, *E&P*, *FUEL* and *PipeLine & Gas Technology*. HART also produces newsletters, custom publishing products, conferences, and unique multi-and single-client consulting services.

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