

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 8, 2014

The Honorable Gina McCarthy  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) was established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, and expanded by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. It requires that fuels sold in the U.S. contain 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2022. Each year the mandate for renewable fuels increases, 18.5 billion gallons of renewable fuels in 2014, 14.4 billion of which is corn-based ethanol.

The goals behind the RFS were well-intentioned, but in 2007, the energy market and our nation's energy landscape were very different than today. The RFS was designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, make our nation more energy secure, and provide a reliable domestic source of energy that would lessen energy imports from less stable regions. Today, we are closer to achieving all of those important goals, but not because of the RFS. The 21<sup>st</sup> century energy renaissance has driven our nation's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions near a twenty year low, made us the number one producer of natural gas, and put us on track to become the world's largest producer of oil in the world.

Meanwhile, the mandate is causing unintended harm to the U.S. economy. More than 40 percent of the nation's corn crop is used for ethanol, an increase from nearly 15 percent when the RFS was created. The strong demand for ethanol has resulted in higher prices for corn and higher prices for feed and food, which was especially severe during last year's drought. Last year, the average U.S. family of four faced a \$2,000 increase in food costs due to higher corn prices brought on largely by the RFS.

This year, we are faced with another challenge created by the RFS. While renewable fuel requirements are increasing yearly, gasoline demand in the U.S. is steadily declining. This dynamic has created the E10 blendwall - the point at which more ethanol is required to be blended than can be safely consumed in the United States, due to fundamental constraints of the fueling infrastructure and problems of gasoline engine incompatibility with increased ethanol blends. With a few exceptions, automobiles are built and warranted for a 10% ethanol blend, and the same goes for small engines, such as boats, lawnmowers, and motorcycles. Research by the Coordinating Research Council demonstrates that the engines of at least 5 million vehicles on the road today could be at risk of damage due to E15.

Finally, instead of improving the environment, the RFS has had the opposite impact. The RFS has contributed to the conversion of grasslands and wetlands in order to plant crops, which has increased greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, according to EPA's lifecycle analysis, corn

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ethanol greenhouse gas emissions in 2012 were higher than gasoline, and will be for years to come. The National Academy of Sciences has noted that overall production and use of ethanol to displace gasoline, also is likely to drive up emissions of other air pollutants, such as particulate matter and ozone.

These unintended consequences associated with the RFS can be averted. We support your recent actions to lower the volumes in your proposed 2014 RFS rulemaking, and we would ask that you stay the course in the final rulemaking and finalize a rule that keeps the volumes below 10% and in line with gasoline market conditions and realities. We strongly urge you to use your administrative authority to take the necessary steps to protect the American consumer and the economy.

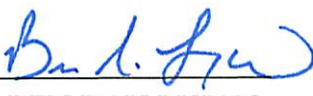
Sincerely,




JIM COSTA  
Member of Congress




HENRY CUELLAR  
Member of Congress



BEN RAY LUJAN  
Member of Congress



FILEMON VELA  
Member of Congress



XAVIER BECERRA  
Member of Congress




TONY CARDENAS  
Member of Congress




PETE GALLEGO  
Member of Congress



RUBÉN HINOJOSA  
Member of Congress



LINDA SÁNCHEZ  
Member of Congress



LORETTA SANCHEZ  
Member of Congress