

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 27, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
National Climate Advisor
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden and Ms. McCarthy:

Thank you for your work to decarbonize our nation's transportation sector and help the United States achieve a clean energy future. Your efforts are critical to maintaining U.S. competitiveness across the globe while bolstering good-paying, union jobs here at home.

We write today with serious concern about recent reports that the Administration is considering a significant reduction to the annual biofuel blending requirements known as the Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs). Specifically, we have strong reservations about the potential for the Administration to destroy over 5 billion gallons of biofuel volume from the 2020, 2021, and 2022 RVOs. This action would directly undermine your commitment to address climate change and restore integrity to the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS).

The RFS was designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the vehicle transportation sector, diversify our fuel supply, strengthen our national security, and drive economic opportunity. When allowed to function as Congress intended, the RFS has delivered on these goals while serving as the economic engine behind a burgeoning bio-based manufacturing sector across rural America and a biofuel industry with a 100-percent U.S. supply chain and a higher union density than the national average.

Every gallon of biofuels that is blended into our nation's fuel supply displaces a gallon of oil and cuts carbon emissions. Multiple studies from academic institutions, federal agencies, and national laboratories have confirmed that corn ethanol (46 percent¹), cellulosic ethanol (70² – 126³ percent), and biodiesel (66 – 79⁴ percent) are less carbon intensive than gasoline and petroleum diesel. Reducing biofuel blending requirements will increase greenhouse gas emissions.

Congress clearly intended the RFS to be a forward-looking policy to drive investments in biofuels production, lead to the next generation of advanced biofuels, and fuel a clean energy agenda for decades. Rather than exempting refiners of their obligations under the Clean Air Act, we urge the Administration to provide additional certainty and stability to the renewable fuels marketplace by issuing strong RVOs for 2021 and 2022, and declining to remand any gallons from the 2020 RVO.

¹ <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/abde08>

² <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/7/4/045905/meta>

³ <https://greet.es.anl.gov/files/xf8nbkoc>

⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0960852417321648>

These actions will create jobs, drive American investment, and cut carbon emissions from the transportation sector.

Again, we appreciate your work to address the climate crisis, and we urge you to reject any actions that would reduce the RVOs or exempt oil refiners of their obligations under the RFS.

We look forward to working with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Cindy Axne
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush



Raja Krishnamoorthi

Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Tim Ryan in black ink.

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Ron Kind in blue ink.

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of David Scott in blue ink.

David Scott
Member of Congress