



PHIL BRYANT
GOVERNOR

August 8, 2019

Administrator Andrew Wheeler
USEPA Headquarters
William Jefferson Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Mail Code: 1101A
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Administrator:

On behalf of the State of Mississippi, I am writing regarding the importance of Small Refinery Hardship Exemptions (SREs) which are issued by the EPA to qualifying refineries with less than 75,000 barrels per day throughput. When Congress enacted the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), a program arising under the federal Clean Air Act (CAA) (42 U.S.C. § 7545), it anticipated that the program might threaten the viability of small refineries, their employees, and the local communities that rely on them. To prevent this, Congress included a provision in the law for the EPA to provide relief to refineries that are disproportionately impacted.

Ergon Refining Inc., in Vicksburg, Mississippi, is such a refinery. It refines 26,500 barrels per day and employs 250 people in the impoverished Mississippi Delta. Last year alone, its total gross payroll was over \$24 million. It provides high paying, long-term jobs and uses many outside services that support local businesses. The economic importance of this facility to Mississippi cannot be overstated.

I understand that the EPA has recently had discussions with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and some members of Congress regarding the possible limiting of SRE grants. Current data shows that SREs have not resulted in demand destruction for ethanol. Rather, ethanol blending rates are steady, and exports are at all-time highs. Ethanol is a preferred, low-cost octane booster that is here to stay – with or without government mandates.

Denying SREs will harm energy employers and employees in my state. Thus, I ask you to continue granting SREs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Bryant".

Phil Bryant
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI • OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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