



NEW JERSEY SENATE

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RE: The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) proposed rule for the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) Program: Standards for 2026 and 2027, Partial Waiver of 2025 Cellulosic Biofuel Volume Requirement, and Other Changes (Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2024-0505)

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

Dear Administrator Zeldin,

My name is Holly Schepisi, and I am submitting the comment below in response to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed rule for the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) Program, which includes draft biofuel mandates for 2026 and 2027.

Since 2021, I have proudly represented New Jersey's 39th Legislative District in the State Senate and worked on behalf of New Jerseyans across Bergen County. Today, I am writing to express serious concerns about these proposed updates to the EPA's RFS program.

During my first summer in office, the New Jersey State Senate passed a bipartisan resolution urging then-President Joe Biden and the EPA to address the excessive regulatory costs of the RFS on America's independent refiners. My colleagues and I voted *unanimously* to protect independent refiners and support RFS reforms. Specifically, our bipartisan resolution urged the EPA to establish reasonable RFS volume mandates:

"...in line with actual gasoline and diesel demand, and to make the reforming and restructuring of the RFS program a national priority, so as to maintain low and stable RIN prices while allowing for the continued blending of renewable fuels, consistent with the original intent of the RFS program."

Now, more than five years after that resolution passed unanimously in our Senate Chamber, I am making the same request again. Independent refiners, which are essential to regional economies and for providing good-paying jobs, continue to grapple with excessive compliance expenses stemming from the outdated structure of the RFS, which requires



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to purchase Renewable Identification Numbers (RINs) to demonstrate compliance.

Over the last decade, the financial expenses associated with RINs have become woefully unsustainable. Some refiners are still reporting that RINs are their biggest expense, exceeding annual costs for labor, utilities, and maintenance *combined*. This excessive regulatory burden places significant financial pressures on refiners. Studies show that our drivers also feel this financial burden, paying up to 30 cents per gallon as a result.

Independent refiners directly employ hundreds of refinery workers throughout our state, while fueling thousands of high-quality, family-sustaining employment opportunities and small businesses across their supply chains. To provide some additional context, our 2021 resolution also described how New Jersey's refining and petrochemical industries "contribute approximately \$600 billion annually to the nation's economy and employ over three million industrial workers in 33 states." All the while, these job creators ensure that our gas stations, airports, and military bases have the finished fuels they need to meet demand and defend our security.

History shows that these unrealistic biofuel mandates will increase RIN prices without boosting biofuel use or significantly changing projected travel demand and subsequent biofuel consumption. Setting reasonable mandates will pave the way for continued increases of biofuel in our transportation fuels without overburdening America's remaining independent refiners.

Respectfully, I ask Administrator Zeldin and the EPA to support New Jersey's refinery workers and consumers by lowering the agency's proposed biofuel mandates for 2026 and 2027 to be no more than 14.2 billion gallons. This would align with the federal government's projected consumption and help to ensure that the implementation of this regulation does not push more independent refineries out of business in our state or beyond. I also ask that independent refiners not be held responsible for covering the RINs if and when any small refinery exemptions are granted.

On behalf of my constituents, please make these adjustments to this proposal to protect jobs and energy security in our state and across the U.S. Northeast.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Holly 7. Schepisi".

Senator Holly Schepisi