

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2020

Andrew Wheeler, Administrator
Environment Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Wheeler,

I'm pleased to hear that EPA is considering a temporary waiver of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) ethanol blending mandate in response to the devastating impact of COVID-19 on global oil markets. Eliminating these burdensome mandates during this time of crisis is necessary if the Nation intends to retain its energy independence moving forward. Beyond the immediate benefits for the energy industry and its workers, this action would lower consumer food prices at a time when millions of Americans are suffering from severe financial hardship. Removing the inflationary impacts of the RFS mandate is another significant deregulatory action that will offer the American people significant economic relief. I urge you to use your existing authority under Section 211(o)(7) of the Clean Air Act to waive this mandate indefinitely, to ensure that no misguided government mandates interfere with the imminent economic recovery.

The economic devastation wrought by COVID-19 has impacted all sectors of the economy. For the oil and gas industry, its effects have been particularly acute; consumer demand for gasoline has fallen over 30% as stay-at-home orders severely restrict travel. The trends are similar for diesel and jet fuel consumption. At the same time, Saudi Arabia and Russia have seized this opportunity and are engaged in a price war intended to run our independent oil and gas producers out of business. The combination of significant demand devastation and overproduction has devastated the American energy industry. Refiners are struggling to stay in business before being forced to comply with RFS obligations based on consumption projections that no longer reflect reality. Unless lifted, these burdens pose an overwhelming threat the future of these industries.

Waiving the RFS biofuel mandates also helps to eliminate the unintended but very real consequences of this program on consumer food prices. The mandate results in a significant portion of US corn crop – up to 40% in recent years – being diverted for use in ethanol production, and the diversion of valuable agricultural land from food production – raising the price not only of corn, but other commodities as well. This also harms farmers and ranchers; forced to pay more for livestock feed, which leads to higher consumer prices for meat and poultry products. Eliminating this artificial inflation in the price of food is critical at a time when millions of Americans are suffering severe financial hardship and struggling to afford basic necessities.

I urge you to use your existing authority under Section 211(o)(7) of the Clean Air Act to waive the biofuel blending requirements indefinitely. The benefits to both the American consumer and the energy industry are critical during this time of great economic strain due to COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration of and your leadership in this important next step in reducing burdens on the American People. I look forward to your timely response.

Very Respectfully,



SCOTT PERRY
Member of Congress
10th District, Pennsylvania