



FOR RELEASE: January 23, 2026
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Independent Refiners, Workers Statement Regarding New Congressional Council to Assess Ethanol Policies and Impacts for Refiners

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Fueling American Jobs Coalition (FAJC) released the following statement after leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives announced plans to establish a new E-15 Rural Domestic Energy Council, which would examine issues surrounding E-15, the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), and U.S. refining capacity to advance legislative solutions.

The announcement came after House lawmakers attempted to include [last-minute provisions that would have authorized year-round E15 sales](#), while practically eliminating most Small Refinery Exemptions (SREs) in fiscal 2026 funding legislation.

"We are relieved that Congress recognizes the need to assess the full impacts of changes to federal biofuel policy surrounding E15 expansion and the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) — from higher consumer fuel costs to weaker domestic refining capacity — instead of forcing a sweeping policy change through a must-pass funding bill.

"Independent refiners are already trapped under the crushing compliance costs of America's flawed RFS. Expanding year-round E15 sales without RFS reform would push extreme biofuel mandates even higher, driving up fuel production costs while eliminating one of the only mechanisms for meaningful cost relief, SREs.

"Ultimately, American drivers pay the price for these extreme mandates every time they fill up their tanks. The RFS already adds 20 to 30 cents more to every gallon at the pump. Although many Americans are seeing lower prices now, high gas prices likely are on the horizon if the RFS does not change. The ethanol lobby has constantly expressed its intention to use unchecked E15 expansion would trigger higher mandates and higher gas prices for families and businesses nationwide, particularly in regions already facing threats to their refining capacity.

"Independent refiners and workers commend Congressional leadership for choosing to confront the facts instead of relenting to political pressure. We stand ready to engage with the Rural Energy Council to pursue a responsible path forward that supports ethanol producers without risking higher fuel costs for American households, lost jobs, or weakened U.S. energy security."

Background

President Trump underscored the importance of a strong domestic refining sector in his [Day One executive order](#), and called for an assessment of refining infrastructure vulnerabilities,

particularly within the U.S. Northeast. The RFS disproportionately burdens independent refineries, including several throughout the Northeast, which lack the infrastructure to blend ethanol due to its chemical constraints and must instead buy compliance credits called Renewable Identification Numbers (RINs).

In 2025, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed two unprecedented RFS rules that would significantly increase compliance obligations on refiners; levels many independent operators warn are unattainable. [Consumer protection groups caution](#) that these proposals could strain refinery operations, accelerate closures, and drive-up fuel prices for consumers nationwide.

At the same time, the world's largest oil companies and Washington's ethanol lobby continue [pressing the EPA to expand ethanol mandates](#) through year-round E15 sales and further changes to the Small Refinery Exemption program, policies that disproportionately harm mid-sized and independent refiners while consolidating market power among the largest players.

These unrealistic standards imposed upon refiners have resulted in [independent refinery closures](#), diminished refining capacity, and [thousands of layoffs](#) across the refining industry, all of which result in [higher gas prices](#) forced onto consumers.

About the Fueling American Jobs Coalition (FAJC)

The Fueling American Jobs Coalition is a coalition of union workers and independent American oil refiners fighting for a commonsense fix to the EPA's flawed Renewable Fuel Standard. The need for significant reform has only grown over the past few years as the cost of purchasing Renewable Identification Numbers (RINs) to comply with the RFS has grown increasingly volatile, threatening some refiners' survival. For additional information, visit www.fuelingusjobs.com.