

August 13, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pence
The White House
Office of the Vice President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Pence,

On behalf of Iowa's growers and biofuel producers, we want to welcome you to Iowa. We understand you will be meeting with some farmers and ranchers, and we hope that provides an opportunity for you to address several renewable fuels issues that remain unresolved and very concerning for rural voters. It would not be an overstatement to say that many rural voters are waiting to see what, if anything, the Trump Administration does to fulfill its promises on renewable fuels. Iowa may very well hang in the balance.

President Trump's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has already undermined the RFS by granting dozens and dozens of illegal RFS refinery exemptions, which have destroyed demand for more than 4 billion gallons of homegrown biofuels, made from Iowa crops like soybeans and corn. As a matter of fact, despite President Trump's public commitment to the RFS, it has not once been actually enforced at the statutory levels during the four years of his presidency.

Now, the EPA is considering a plan to double-down on efforts to undermine the RFS with retroactive handouts that would allow multi-billion-dollar oil companies to claim "hardship" exemptions from obligations dating as far back as 2011. These retroactive handouts are designed to sidestep a January 2020 court ruling curtailing EPA's abuse of RFS exemption provisions.

President Trump should immediately order EPA Administrator Wheeler to reject all the nearly 60 new, baseless RFS exemption petitions and apply the 10th Circuit decision to all pending RFS refinery exemption requests. Such an action would be welcome news this week to farmers across Iowa who are dealing with a devastating windstorm that swept through the state just days ago.

In addition, President Trump promised to protect the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) at statutory levels. In fact, we have been told in meetings with senior White House officials that the 15-billion-gallon conventional level for the RFS was "biblical" with President Trump. Yet, we sit here today without a proposal for 2021 RFS levels that typically would have been released months ago. If the Trump Administration is delaying this important action until after the election, how can we interpret that as anything but turning your back on farmers and biofuels producers?

Rural communities are on the brink after four years of lost export markets, illegal RFS demand destruction, and COVID-19 reductions in fuel use – leaving our agricultural community facing depressed biofuel and commodity prices and needless market uncertainty. Plants have shuttered, rural workers have been left jobless, and farmers have seen their markets decimated.

We fervently hope that you can find time while in Iowa to address these urgent matters for rural communities. Make no mistake, these issues are being discussed daily around the state and it is often

reported back to us that lowans are saying: “If we can’t trust the Trump Administration to do the right thing before the election, then why on Earth would we expect them to treat us fairly after the election.”

President Trump has the power to immediately end this frustration and to remove all doubt of his commitment to the RFS and rural Americans. He can and should move immediately to direct the EPA to reject all “gap year” RFS exemption petitions and apply the 10th Circuit decision to all RFS exemption petitions going forward. The RFS is essential to the livelihoods of farmers and workers across our state. There is still time for President Trump to keep his RFS promise and to ensure that proper RFS levels are enforced.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Jim Greif
President, Iowa Corn Growers Association



Tim Bardole
President, Iowa Soybean Association



Monte Shaw
Executive Director, Iowa Renewable Fuels Association



Brad Wilson
Chairman, Iowa Biodiesel Board

