

August 18, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump,

On behalf of Iowa's farmers and biofuel producers, we want to thank you for visiting Iowa during this very trying time. The loss of key export markets, abuse of Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) refinery exemptions by the EPA, and the economic downturn resulting from COVID-19 have combined to stretch rural Iowa to its limit. Now, you are seeing first-hand the destruction wrought by a historic "derecho" windstorm that may have impacted up to 14 million acres of Iowa crops.

We sincerely appreciate your expedited approval of the disaster aid badly needed to help Iowans deal with the immediate aftermath of the derecho. Iowans are tough and resilient, but the scope of destruction is hard to fathom. Today's action will assist countless Iowans to begin the long road back to normalcy. While we are appreciative of the disaster aid, rural Iowa will not complete the long road back to normal without robust and stable markets for our crops and biofuels.

So we write today beseeching you to fulfill your promise to protect the RFS and to implement the program at statutory levels. One senior White House official has even told us that the 15-billion-gallon conventional level for the RFS was "biblical" to you. Yet, the fact of the matter is that the RFS has not actually been enforced at the statutory levels during the four years of your presidency.

The 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, that in turn destroys markets for Iowa corn and soybean crops.

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.

Mr. President, you have the power to immediately end the frustration of farmers related to biofuels and to remove all doubt of your commitment to the RFS. Please order EPA Administrator Wheeler to reject all of the nearly 60 new, baseless RFS exemption petitions and to apply the 10th Circuit decision to all pending RFS refinery exemption requests. Uphold the integrity of the law by enforcing that 15 billion gallons of corn-ethanol means corn ethanol or remove the cap for corn all together so that farmers have access to the market for clean-burning homegrown fuels.

Make no mistake, we often hear from farmers: "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?" Many rural voters are waiting to see if you will uphold the RFS and your promise before the election. Iowa may very well hang in the balance.

Please immediately direct 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 biofuels workers across our state. There is still time to ensure that proper RFS levels are enforced. Farmers would welcome positive market news this week as we are dealing with a devastating storm that swept through over a third of the state last week.

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

