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To Group A-AND-R-DOCKET@EPA

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Subject Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2008-0380

Dear Administrator Johnson,

The U.S. ethanol policy needs to change before it causes further damage to our economy. Please approve Governor Rick Perry's request for a waiver of 50% of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) mandate for grain-based ethanol.

Corn-based ethanol has unintended negative consequences for the environment and water conservation. A typical ethanol factory that produces 50 million gallons of biofuels a year will need about 500 gallons of water a minute. This places an incredible strain on our natural resources and raises serious questions about ethanol's sustainability.

There is no doubt that ethanol production has significantly affected the price of corn, but there also is general consensus that ethanol mandates and subsidies have contributed to skyrocketing food prices in general. For the last 15 years, U.S. food prices have averaged a 2.5% increase in each year. In 2007, U.S. food prices rose 4% - the highest since 1990 - and are expected to rise 6% in 2008. With prices continuing to rise at the grocery store, Americans cannot afford to replace fuel with food.

The effects of U.S. ethanol mandates are felt across the globe, resulting in rising prices for corn, grains, and other crops. Grains account for over 50% of the diet in some of the poorest countries in the world and the rising cost of food is detrimental to these countries. These rising food prices threaten disaster for the 160 million people worldwide who survive on less than fifty cents a day.

Corn-based ethanol has many negative implications and it is not the solution for the U.S. energy crisis. A gallon of ethanol has about a third less energy than a gallon of gasoline, so mileage drops rapidly. Furthermore, producing corn-based ethanol requires an almost equivalent amount of fossil fuel energy. We need real alternatives to gasoline that address the energy crisis without hurting the environment or affecting food prices.

Please do not ignore the negative implications of ethanol mandates and grant Governor Perry's waiver request today.

Sincerely,
Wilma Holt
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