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To Group A-AND-R-DOCKET@EPA
cc
bcc
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.

A major problem with ethanol is its impact on the environment. Though originally touted as an environmentally friendly alternative to gasoline, scientists are discovering that ethanol production has serious implications for the environment. No conclusive evidence supports claims that it helps the environment by reducing air pollutants. For example, ethanol releases high levels of nitrogen oxide -- one of the principal ingredients of smog -- when burned.

Though ethanol has many negative effects, food prices have the most direct impact on Americans. Some estimate that increased biofuel demand accounts for 39% of the increase in corn prices, 21% of the increase in rice prices and 22% of the increase in wheat prices.

An important issue to consider when reviewing ethanol mandates is global hunger. Approximately 100 million people worldwide have been pushed into poverty because of escalating food prices over the past two years. A number of converging factors contribute to global hunger, but ethanol policies are the only one we can address here in the United States. In April, the United Nations called for a five-year moratorium on the production of biofuels to address the global food crisis. We must do our part in the United States and put an end to a government policy that causes food prices to rise here at home and across the globe.

Ethanol alone is not going to solve the energy crisis in the United States because it is not a viable liquid fuel replacement for gasoline. There simply is not enough corn to fuel our vehicles. Last year, the United States burned approximately one-quarter of its national corn supply as fuel, which only led to a 1% reduction in the country's oil consumption. Additionally, ethanol is not as fuel-efficient as regular gasoline, and it is more expensive to produce. We must look for better, more realistic alternatives to reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

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

Sincerely,
Tonya Beck
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