

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2018

Acting Administrator Wheeler
Environmental Protection Agency
Office of the Administrator - 1101A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Acting Administrator Wheeler:

We write regarding recent actions taken by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to waive Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) blending requirements. We are concerned that these actions have effectively cut blending targets by 2.25 billion gallons, contributing to higher gas prices and elevated levels of harmful emissions, especially in communities of color. We therefore urge you to halt the issuance of any additional waivers and to instead consider steps that could help to unlock the full health and economic benefits of biofuels.

As you may know, transportation emissions have overtaken power plants as the primary source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Unfortunately, these emissions have been found to cause or aggravate serious health conditions. For example, combustion emits aromatic hydrocarbons that increase fine particles in the air, which may in turn cause premature death, irregular heartbeat, asthma, and other respiratory problems. Further, performance-enhancing additives like methyl tertiary-butyl ether (MTBE) are known to contaminate water supplies, while alternatives such as benzene have been found to cause cancer.

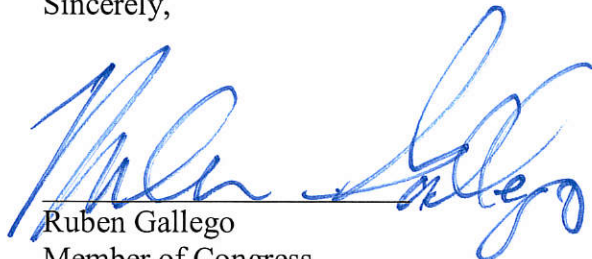
The effects of these emissions are not borne evenly across our country. Evidence continues to mount that communities of color are disproportionately impacted by air pollution, including transportation emissions. In February, scientists from the EPA's National Center for Environmental Assessment published a study which found that in 46 states, non-white communities are between 1.2 and 1.5 times more likely to be exposed to higher levels of fine particle pollution than white communities, and people living in poverty were 1.3 times more likely to be negatively affected.

Fortunately, the use of biofuels lowers particulate matter and removes harmful aromatics from the transportation fuel supply. In addition, ethanol is already used as a replacement for additives like MTBE, helping to keep this and other harmful chemicals out of our drinking water.


Beyond these important public health benefits, biofuels also present a sustainable fuel solution that can reliably lower gas prices for consumers. However, EPA waivers have served to keep ethanol out of the market, contributing to higher prices at the pump for American consumers and disproportionately harming low-income communities where residents typically spend a higher percentage of their income on transportation costs.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to halt the issuance of additional RFS waivers and to reallocate waived gallons in the 2019 Renewable Volume Obligation (RVO). Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



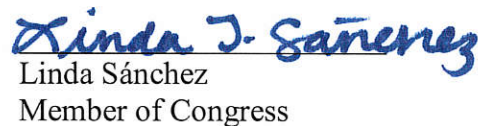
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



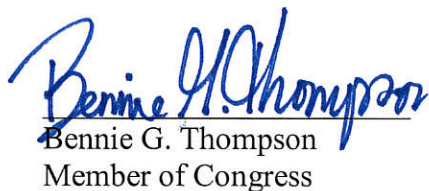
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



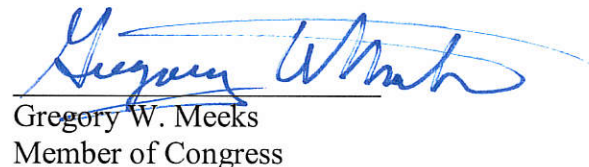
Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress



Linda J. Sanchez
Member of Congress



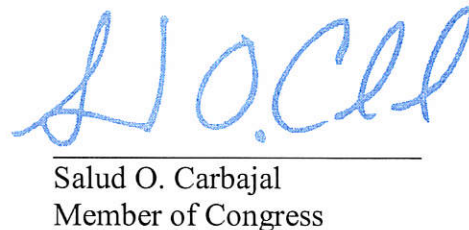
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



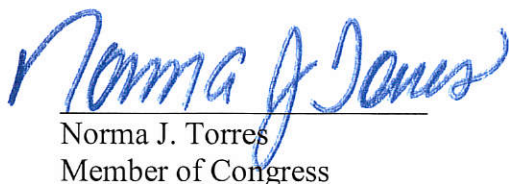
Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
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Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



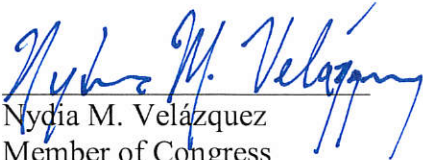
Ruben J. Kihuen
Member of Congress



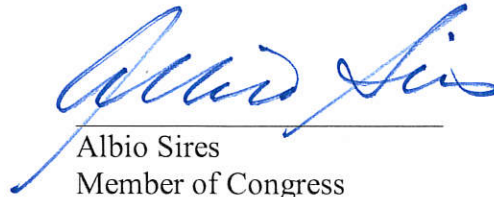
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



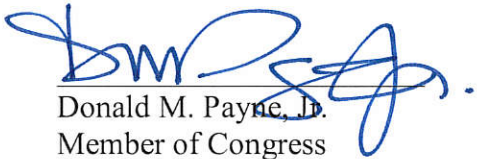
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



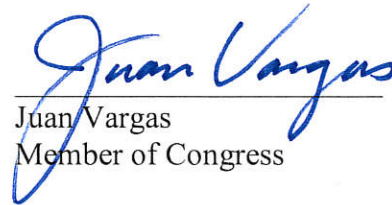
Donald M. Payne, Jr.
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