

Get Biofuels Right: Fix the Senate RFS

Cut Global Warming, Reduce Oil Dependence, Protect the Environment

The Senate Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) provision lacks essential safeguards to keep its five-fold increase in biofuels production from trading one set of environmental harms for another. As drafted, the RFS does little to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and would incentivize the loss of critical wildlife habitat, natural forests and grasslands, the large scale degradation of water quality, and negative impacts on human health.

Better Biofuels Legislation Must

Keep the Biofuels Program Under Clean Air Act:

- EPA cannot carry out its job of protecting public health without having the authority to regulate the quality of our nation's fuel supplies under the Clean Air Act.
- Among federal agencies, EPA has the most experience and expertise related to transportation fuels, and is already responsible for implementing the current RFS program.
- The Clean Air Act provides important checks and balances, including specific statutory requirements regarding record keeping and public participation in rulemaking, as well as administrative and citizen enforcement measures.

Protect Critical Public and Private Lands:

- Direct biomass production toward agricultural lands and forest plantations already used or cleared for planting.
- Restrict most other forest sourcing to pre-commercial thinning.
- Establish minimum environmental standards for feedstock production to protect against water contamination, soil erosion, and habitat loss.
- Establish a voluntary certification, labeling, and incentives program to promote sustainable biofuels and best practices for biofuels production.
- Discourage the cultivation of invasive or weedy species for biofuel production
- Give the Environmental Protection Agency authority to adjust the fuel volume targets of any mandated increase in biofuels production if it finds that the increase would cause negative environmental impacts.

Provide Public Health Safeguards:

- Modify the ethanol/gasoline blending process or require higher amounts of ethanol (at least 85 percent) to be mixed with the gasoline to avoid increased air pollution.
- Require that increased biofuels use does not increase air pollution over the amount attributable to gasoline sold in 2007 and clarify it does not supersede or affect any state or federal requirement under the Clean Air Act to reduce harmful emissions.

Reduce Global Warming Pollution:

- All biofuels that are used to meet a renewable fuels standard (RFS) established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 should achieve at least the current industry average of 20 percent better emissions footprint than gasoline.
- Any increase in the RFS must require that biofuels meeting the Standard achieve at least a 50 percent reduction in lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.

*Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice * Friends of the Earth*

*Environmental Working Group * National Audubon Society * National Environmental Trust*

*Natural Resources Defense Council * Sustainable Agriculture Coalition*

*Western Organization of Resource Councils * The Wilderness Society*