

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

October 24, 2013

Hon. Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Director
Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Burwell:

I am deeply concerned by rumored proposed changes to the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) for 2014.

Each year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is required to set Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs) based on the RFS. EPA has the authority within RFS to waive mandates to raise biofuel minimums, as it has done in limited ways in recent years, based on the lack of supply in the market. However, recent reports indicate that 2014 RVOs may, for the first time, adjust the overall RFS level as prescribed in law.

To fully utilize the potential of biofuels, ongoing investments in both advanced fuels and infrastructure – which currently is not controlled by those actually producing biofuels - will be necessary. Much of the investment in this industry is driven, at least part, by ongoing security of long term renewable fuels usage goals in the RFS. Reductions in the RFS has the potential to significantly hinder future investments in biofuels - a key tool in domestic energy independence - limit future environmental benefits of increased renewable fuel use, and harm rural economies.

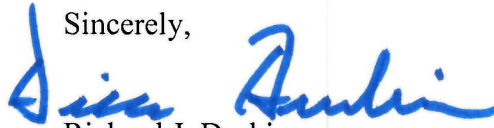
Congress established the RFS to promote energy independence and domestic production of new fuel sources. It was designed to also improve our balance of trade and strengthen national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil. The RFS has proven to be an overwhelming success, with annual production of domestic biofuels exceeding 13 billion gallons, displacing nearly 500 million barrels of imported foreign oil. Ethanol is currently the largest component of domestic biofuels production, and its inclusion in the domestic supply has significantly lowered the cost of gasoline for consumers.

The RFS also has enhanced domestic grain markets and expanded economic development opportunities in rural America. With 14 plants in Illinois, the ethanol industry alone supports more than 5,400 direct jobs and payroll exceeding \$250 million annually. Illinois produced 1.65 billion gallons of ethanol in 2011. RFS has also provided enough certainty for investments in 5 biodiesel plants in Illinois.

I ask that you fully consider the ramifications on Illinois' rural economy and our long term energy goals before altering a program that has led to sustained growth in and adoption of domestically produced biofuels.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dick Durbin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dick" and last name "Durbin" clearly distinguishable.

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator