

Duckworth, Durbin Join Klobuchar in Urging Biden Administration to Uphold Renewable Fuel Standard Obligations for Oil Refiners

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and US. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and 13 bicameral colleagues to call on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Economic Council (NEC) to uphold the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) for oil refiners. In a letter to EPA Administrator Michael Regan and NEC Director Brian Deese, the Members address the significant concern about recent reports that the Biden administration is considering several options to exempt oil refiners of their obligations under the *Clean Air Act*'s RFS, which would increase the country's reliance on oil and create more carbon emissions.

“Rather than exempting refiners of their obligations under the Clean Air Act, the Administration should provide additional certainty and stability to the renewable fuels marketplace that will create jobs, drive investment, and cut carbon emissions from the existing vehicle fleet,” the Members wrote. “We encourage your Administration to swiftly issue a proposed rule for the 2021 and 2022 Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs) with strong blending targets and respond to the 2017 Court remand in *Americans for Clean Energy, et al., v. Environmental Protection Agency* to reinstate 500 million gallons of blending requirements inappropriately waived from the 2016 blending targets.”

Duckworth has long been a strong supporter of the RFS. Earlier this year she introduced [bipartisan legislation](#), the *RFS Integrity Act of 2021*, to help bring transparency to the EPA’s small refinery exemption process. Duckworth and Durbin previously called on then-President-elect Biden to [restore RFS policy](#) and she [applauded](#) the administration’s decision to do so. The RFS supports a \$5 billion biofuel industry in Illinois that employs more than 4,000 people.

In addition to Duckworth, Durbin and Klobuchar, this letter was signed by U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Tina Smith (D-MN), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR), as well as U.S. Representatives Cheri Bustos (D-IL-17), Cindy Axne (D-IA-03), and Angie Craig (D-MN-02), Mark Pocan (D-WI-02), Ron Kind (D-WI-03), David Scott (D-GA-13), Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-08) and Ruben Gallego (D-AZ-07).

[Full text of the letter can be found here below.](#)

Dear Administrator Regan and Director Deese:

We write with significant concern about recent reports that the Administration is considering several options to exempt oil refiners of their obligations under the Clean Air Act’s Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). We support your efforts to address climate change, but we are concerned that rolling back the RFS obligation for refiners directly contradicts this work. Following through on the actions reportedly under discussion would directly undermine your commitment to address climate change and restore integrity to the RFS and we urge you to reject them.

The RFS was designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the vehicle transportation sector, diversify our fuel supply, strengthen our national security, and drive economic opportunity. When allowed to work as Congress intended, the RFS has

delivered on these goals while serving as the economic engine behind a growing biobased manufacturing sector across rural America and a biofuel industry with a 100 percent U.S. supply chain and a higher union density than the national average.

The proposals identified in media reports as options under consideration by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have one thing in common: they all unjustifiably waive Clean Air Act compliance requirements for a small group of refiners that the EPA has repeatedly determined are not negatively impacted by the RFS. If adopted, greenhouse gas emissions will increase, our reliance on oil will increase, consumers will pay more at the pump, and the U.S. economy will be harmed.

Rather than exempting refiners of their obligations under the Clean Air Act, the Administration should provide additional certainty and stability to the renewable fuels marketplace that will create jobs, drive investment, and cut carbon emissions from the existing vehicle fleet. We encourage your Administration to swiftly issue a proposed rule for the 2021 and 2022 Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs) with strong blending targets and respond to the 2017 Court remand in *Americans for Clean Energy, et al., v. Environmental Protection Agency* to reinstate 500 million gallons of blending requirements inappropriately waived from the 2016 blending targets.

As your Administration continues to push for meaningful and rapid climate action, biofuels can and should play an important role in decarbonizing vehicle emissions. Recent studies demonstrate that using ethanol in place of gasoline reduces greenhouse gas emissions by almost half while biodiesel cuts greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 74 percent. Exempting refiners of their obligations to blend biofuel would mean increased reliance on oil and more carbon emissions – a result this country cannot afford if we are to meet our new commitment under the Paris Agreement to reduce emissions by 50 – 52 percent by 2030.

We urge you to reject any actions under discussion to exempt oil refiners of their obligations under the RFS and uphold your commitment to combatting climate change and supporting our nation's farmers.

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