

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 26, 2019

The Honorable Andrew Wheeler
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Wheeler,

We are extremely concerned that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to abuse the use of small refinery hardship waivers under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). On Friday, August 8, 2019, the EPA issued another 31 such waivers, effectively reducing demand for renewable fuels by over 1.4 billion gallons. This is on top of the 54 refinery waivers already approved by this Administration over the last two years, which eliminated demand for more than 2.6 billion gallons of biofuels. Comparing the last three years of the previous administration to the first three years of the current administration, the Trump Administration has increased the granting of waivers by an astounding 370 percent, with “small refinery” waivers going to some of the world’s largest oil companies.

This pattern of demand destruction is wreaking havoc on our nation’s rural economy. In recent months, more than 13 ethanol plants and 8 biodiesel plants have idled production or shut down across the country. Not only did these biofuel plants support thousands of rural jobs across the country, they served as important markets for farmers, processing millions of bushels of corn, soybeans, and other commodities. At a time when farmers are already struggling after years of low prices and a chaotic trade agenda, this Administration chose to destroy more markets for farmers and harm rural communities across the country.

To add insult to injury, recent reports indicate that President Trump personally made the decision to grant these 31 waivers, despite numerous promises to support renewable fuels. EPA continues to undercut the integrity of the RFS by misusing its waiver authority, which in turn has a direct adverse impact on farmers and jobs in rural communities. We write to urge you once again to end the abuse of these small refinery exemptions, immediately reallocate the remaining gallons, and make public information regarding any recipients of these exemptions.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Tina Smith
United States Senator



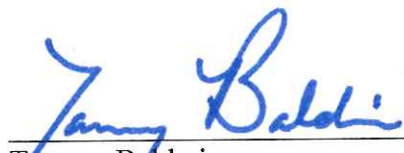
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



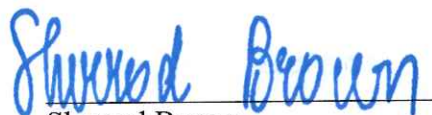
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



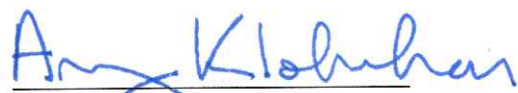
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator