



GOVERNORS' BIOFUELS COALITION

- Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, Chair • South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, Vice Chair
- Executive Director, Larry Pearce

February 10, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Please accept my congratulations on your election as the 46th President of the United States. I write to you today as the Governor of Minnesota and as the chair of the Governors' Biofuels Coalition. For over two decades, this bipartisan coalition has worked together to advance biofuels, agriculture, and environmental policy with a unified message from the nation's governors. We look forward to working with you and Vice President Harris on a range of issues important to all Americans.

It is clear that we collectively face unprecedented and complex challenges that will require considerable ingenuity and determination to solve. One of those challenges is climate change. I know you are committed to reengaging the federal government in policies and programs to make progress in this area and that you are dedicated to partnering with states in that effort. I look forward to such a partnership.

As you begin your critical work to address climate change and promote economic opportunity, I encourage you to work with states on making biofuels a key component of addressing transportation sector emissions. Biofuels are especially important in the near term as we begin the necessary transition into a carbon-neutral transportation sector. And they provide significant opportunity for economic growth and investment across rural America.

Two key administrative actions will help ensure the future of the states' biofuels community, which is now threatened by trade wars, a litigious petroleum industry, and shrinking demand caused by the pandemic. Swift support for this endangered industry is crucial, which is why I urge you to take the following actions to support biofuels in the years ahead.

Issue an Executive Order Banning the Use of Aromatics in Gasoline

To benefit public health, the environment, and the biofuels industry, I urge you to consider executive action directing the enforcement of the *Clean Air Act's* aromatics provision. That provision, which has been largely unenforced for decades, requires the reduction of toxic gasoline aromatics, replaced with cleaner octane additives.

Reducing aromatics would lessen the fine particulate emissions associated with respiratory diseases. Enforcement of the aromatics provision would also create well-paying jobs and eliminate gasoline's most carbon intensive component. This order would expand the market for ethanol by a projected twofold increase, a key to our collective efforts to revitalize jobs and encourage economic growth in rural America.

Adopt New Renewable Fuel Standard Regulations

The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) is one of Congress's most significant energy policy accomplishments. However, the RFS's waiver provision has been used by billion-dollar companies to obtain inappropriate blending waivers that have severely damaged the nation's biofuels industry. The most harmful abuse—the manipulation of the RFS's small refinery exemption—is but one of several ways the regulations have been distorted to keep the RFS from meeting its full potential. I would welcome an opportunity to work with you and your Administration on RFS regulations to ensure that they create the positive impact that was intended.

Over the years, I have seen firsthand how the ethanol industry has transformed and revived rural communities and contributed to the fight against climate change. Today, those communities, along with the ethanol industry, are endangered. These proposed executive actions would provide much needed stability in rural America and provide countless benefits to all Americans.

As you consider these actions, I also encourage you to support the effort led by Senator Klobuchar and Senator Ernst to create a renewable fuel infrastructure grant program and to streamline underground storage tank regulations. Their plan would smooth the path to higher biofuel blends and amplify the impact of the executive actions outlined in this letter.

Thank you for your consideration of these important actions. If members of your staff need additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to Larry Pearce, the Governors' Biofuels Coalition's executive director (402-651-2948, larrypearce@governorscoalition.org).

Sincerely,



Tim Walz, Chair
and Governor of Minnesota

cc:

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary Nominee, U.S. Department of Agriculture
The Honorable Michael S. Regan, Administrator Nominee, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
The Honorable Brenda Mallory, White House Council on Environmental Quality
The Honorable Brian Dees, National Economic Council
The Honorable Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Deputy Director of Public Engagement