

DARRELL E. ISSA, CALIFORNIA  
CHAIRMAN

JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA  
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO  
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE  
PATRICK T. McHENRY, NORTH CAROLINA  
JIM JORDAN, OHIO  
JASON CHAFFETZ, UTAH  
TIM WALBERG, MICHIGAN  
JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA  
JUSTIN AMASH, MICHIGAN  
PAUL A. GOSAR, ARIZONA  
PATRICK MEEHAN, PENNSYLVANIA  
SCOTT DESJARLAIS, TENNESSEE  
TREY GOWDY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
BLAKE FARENTHOLD, TEXAS  
DOC HASTINGS, WASHINGTON  
CYNTHIA M. LUMMIS, WYOMING  
ROB WOODALL, GEORGIA  
THOMAS MASSIE, KENTUCKY  
DOUG COLLINS, GEORGIA  
MARK MEADOWS, NORTH CAROLINA  
KERRY L. BENTIVOLIO, MICHIGAN  
RON DeSANTIS, FLORIDA

LAWRENCE J. BRADY  
STAFF DIRECTOR

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051  
<http://oversight.house.gov>

ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND  
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK  
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI  
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS  
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE  
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, VIRGINIA  
JACKIE SPEIER, CALIFORNIA  
MATTHEW A. CARTWRIGHT, PENNSYLVANIA  
L. TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS  
ROBIN L. KELLY, ILLINOIS  
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS  
PETER WELCH, VERMONT  
TONY CARDENAS, CALIFORNIA  
STEVEN A. HORSFORD, NEVADA  
MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, NEW MEXICO  
VACANCY

### Opening Statement Rep. Jackie Speier, Ranking Member

#### Subcommittee on Energy Policy, Health Care and Entitlements Hearing on “Examining EPA’s Management of the Renewable Fuel Standard Program”

December 10, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad you’ve called this hearing.

But before we get further into the details of the Renewable Fuel Standard, I want to take a step back and look at the big picture.

There is broad consensus amongst scientists that fossil fuel pollution has warmed the Earth by more than a full degree over the past century which has resulted in the sea rising by eight inches. This is not an abstract problem to my constituents on the San Francisco Peninsula, with more than 110,000 people, \$24 billion in property, and a major international airport at risk from rising seas. This is also not an abstract problem for people around the world, where 2014 is on track to be the hottest year on record. And climate change is not an abstract problem to the Pentagon, which has linked climate change to the potential for increased terrorist activity and other forms of violence.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirms that the best way to limit the damage is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to start proactively planning for the impacts. In its latest report on mitigating the effects of climate change, which was released last week, the IPCC says that it is not too late to limit warming to tolerable levels -- but that to do so, the world must act now.

The Renewable Fuel Standard, expanded by the Energy Independence and Security Act in 2007, is a bi-partisan approach to confronting that problem. President George W. Bush said on the day that he signed this act, and I quote, “Today we make a major step with the Energy Independence and Security Act. We make a major step toward reducing our dependence on oil, confronting global climate change, expanding the production of renewable fuels and giving future generations of our country a nation that is stronger, cleaner and more secure.”

The RFS created a market for the advanced biofuel and cellulosic biofuel industry to innovate a better fuel for our cars. More than \$5.7 billion has been invested in advanced biofuels. Unlike traditional corn ethanol, this industry is still in its infancy, and it is relying on the RFS mandates to propel it to the next level. Along with this relatively new industry come jobs. The ethanol industry has directly and indirectly created close to 400,000 jobs.

can grow diesel gasoline in vats, Bay Area companies are showing that advanced biofuels can be one of the ways to cleaner future.

Now, all this innovation is jeopardized by the EPA's failure to issue 2014 renewable fuel standards. The EPA is required under statute to release these standards by November of the previous year, but has missed its deadline for each of the last three years.

Today, we are having this hearing because the EPA is not issuing 2014 standards at all. They are essentially telling biofuel manufacturers and gasoline refiners that they will just have to guess how much biofuel they should have made for 2014. Since there's no sign of a 2015 standard yet, the EPA is telling industry that they'll just have to keep on guessing into next year.

This is no way to run a business, and frankly, no way to run an agency. I'm glad the Chairman called this hearing today, because these delays in setting RFS standards are creating market instability across the board in the agriculture, renewable fuel and gasoline industries.

Today is an opportunity to find ways to move forward in a more productive manner on the RFS. I do not believe the answer is to throw away all the progress that the renewable fuel industry has made in reducing carbon emissions and driving technological innovation. But EPA has to do better if the RFS is to accomplish its goals.

It is my hope today to impress upon the EPA the need to act swiftly and set the RFS for 2014, 2015, and 2016 and to consider exercising its authority and executing multi-year rulemakings for the RFS. EPA must acknowledge that it cannot continue with ever-increasing delays in RFS rulemaking, and find solutions that will provide more certainty to the businesses that depend on them doing their job.

I also think that Congress has to share some of the blame. In every case I can think of, Congress passes laws that require agencies to promulgate a rule just once. But the law establishing the Renewable Fuel Standard required EPA to issue a new rule every single year. And since the RFS came into effect in 2007, the EPA's budget has been stagnant and they have lost over 2,000 full-time-equivalent employees.

But I also do not want to lose sight of the larger picture. The United States is undergoing an unprecedented energy revolution. We have recently overtaken Saudi Arabia as the world's number one oil producer. Energy security is important – but so is climate security. You can't drive on a road that is three feet underwater, no matter how cheap gas prices are. Fossil fuels might be more inexpensive and accessible than ever, but burning ever-more oil and gas will burn us out of a livable planet.

That is why the RFS, while flawed, is important. The development of advanced biofuels is one of the most important tools we have to achieving a safe climate for future generations.

I look forward to hearing from EPA about the barriers they face in implementing the RFS and how they plan to move forward.

I yield back.

---

Contact: Jennifer Hoffman, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181.