



News Release

For Immediate Release
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EPA Denies the RFS Waiver Request

On August 7, 2008, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Stephen L. Johnson announced that EPA would deny a request submitted by the State of Texas to reduce the nationwide Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS). Working with the Departments of Energy and Agriculture, EPA considered more than 15,000 public comments and determined that the RFS is not causing "severe harm" to the economy. This means that the total volume of renewable fuels mandated by law to be blended into the fuel supply will remain at 9 billion gallons in 2008 and 11.1 billion gallons in 2009.

Jetta Wong, EESI's Senior Policy Associate for the Sustainable Biomass and Energy Program, said this about EPA's decision, "EESI is glad to see that EPA denied the waiver. It is reassuring that EPA's analysis confirmed what many universities and experts have been staying, which is that the RFS was NOT causing severe harm to the US or the Texas economy."

The Energy Policy Act of 2005, which established the RFS program, includes provisions to enable the EPA Administrator to suspend part of the RFS if its implementation would severely harm the economy or environment of a state, region, or the entire country. In a letter sent to EPA on April 25, 2008, Governor Rick Perry of Texas requested that the EPA cut the RFS mandate for ethanol production in half [noted above], citing recent economic impacts in Texas.

[EPA Press Release](#)

[EPA Fact Sheet](#)

Comment Period Open on USDA's Climate Change Strategic Planning

On August 6, 2008, the Office of the Chief Economist at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that it is seeking comments regarding USDA's Climate Change Strategic Planning Priorities and goals for Research, Education, and Extension. In collaboration with the United States Climate Change Science Program, USDA released a scientific assessment, "The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land Resources, Water Resources, and Biodiversity in the United States." USDA is requesting input on its efforts to create a strategic plan for climate change research, education, and extension. **Comments must be received by September 19, 2008.**

Draft goals of USDA's strategic plan include: 1) to understand the effects of climate change on ecosystems, 2) to develop knowledge and tools to facilitate adjustment to climate change and to improve the resilience of ecosystems, 3) to develop knowledge and tools to decrease greenhouse gas emissions resulting from agriculture, forestry, and other land management practices, and 4) to improve decision making by delivering climate change science and technology to USDA agencies, stakeholders, and collaborators. Comments will be considered during the creation of the strategic plan.

[Federal Register Notice](#) (.pdf format)

[The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land Resources, Water Resources, and Biodiversity in the United States \(Summary Brochure\)](#) (.pdf format)

[The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land Resources, Water Resources, and Biodiversity in the United](#)

[States \(May 2008 Full Report\)](#) (.pdf format)

If you have questions, please email or call Jetta Wong at [jwong \[at\] eesi.org](mailto:jwong@eesi.org) or (202) 662-1885.

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The Environmental and Energy Study Institute is a non-profit organization established in 1984 by a bipartisan, bicameral group of members of Congress to provide timely information on energy and environmental policy issues to policymakers and stakeholders and develop innovative policy solutions that set us on a cleaner, more secure and sustainable energy path.