

Corn growers respond to EPA final decision on Renewable Fuel Standard

Decision on ethanol policy will impact farmers, families, rural communities across Michigan

LANSING – Today’s final decision by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) represents progress from the agency’s earlier proposal to slash America’s Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), but headwinds for biofuels remain, said leaders of the **Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA)** and **National Corn Growers Association (NCGA)**.

“We are pleased to see the EPA revise its Renewable Fuel Standard proposal, but the failure to meet statutory levels creates headwinds for an industry that benefits everyone in Michigan,” said **Jim Zook**, executive director of the **Michigan Corn Growers Association**. “Michigan-made ethanol creates jobs across our state, gives consumers a choice at the pump, reduces our reliance on foreign oil and protects our air, land and Great Lakes. Today’s decision takes a promising step forward by revising EPA’s earlier proposal, but still runs the risk of curtailing the benefits of ethanol.”

Created in 2005, the RFS determines the amount of clean-burning biofuels blended into the fuel supply. Oil companies that view ethanol as a threat to their massive profits have worked hard to undercut the policy, even as America’s capacity to create and deliver ethanol to consumers continues to grow.

“Corn growers recognize that EPA revised its proposal, which is a step in the right direction, but we remain concerned that failing to set the Renewable Volume Obligations at the statutory level will have a serious economic impact for corn farmers and rural communities,” said **Jeff Sandborn**, a corn farmer near Portland, MI and board member of **NCGA**. “For corn farmers, rural businesses and small towns across rural America, the RFS has encouraged an industry that creates thousands of good jobs and builds up the farm economy. We are hopeful for the future of the ethanol industry, and we will continue to advocate the benefits of Michigan-made biofuels.”

Sandborn emphasized the importance of the decision for the rural economy. Current net farm income, projected at \$58.3 billion for 2015, is down by more than 50 percent compared with the record \$123.7 billion level in 2013 and would be the lowest since 2006. Meanwhile, economic analyses have shown ethanol production in Michigan is tied to more than 22,000 Michigan jobs – many of them in rural communities statewide.

The EPA had been considering a reduction in the RFS since June, and hundreds of thousands of Americans opposed rolling back the policy in comments to the agency.

For more information on the EPA’s decision to reduce the Renewable Fuel Standard, visit www.micorn.org.