



February 18, 2026

Representative Stephanie Bice
Co-Chair
E-15 Rural Domestic Energy Council
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Randy Feenstra
Co-Chair
E-15 Rural Domestic Energy Council
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear E-15 Rural Domestic Energy Council Co-Chairs Bice and Feenstra, and Members of the Council,

On behalf of our combined members and supporters across the country, our organizations write to express concern about permanently waiving rules to allow the year-round sale of gasoline blended with 15 percent ethanol (E15). Such a waiver would exempt E15 from environmental standards that apply to competing fuels, giving ethanol an additional and unwarranted advantage in an already distorted marketplace.

Putting more corn ethanol into the fuel market without altering federal mandates and subsidies will not provide consumers with more meaningful fuel choice or reduce prices. Instead, lawmakers should focus on removing federal interventions that distort the market, including reforming the broken Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and eliminating duplicative subsidies such as the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit. The existing RFS corn ethanol mandate, coupled with revived ethanol tax breaks, creates artificial demand for ethanol, distorts markets, and burdens taxpayers, businesses, agricultural interests, the environment, and consumers with added costs.

Ethanol's corrosive properties also impose real infrastructure costs. As higher blends are forced into the fuel supply, gas stations must undertake expensive retrofits to accommodate them, including replacing underground storage tanks and fuel dispensers. Because these costs are prohibitive for many retailers, taxpayers are frequently asked to foot the bill through state and federal biofuel infrastructure programs that provide hundreds of millions of dollars in matching grants for E15 and E85 blender pump installation.

Higher ethanol blends are not suitable for boats, motorcycles, and other small engines, and E15 is not warranted for use in older vehicles. In fact, many vehicles still on the road today are incompatible with E15, exposing car owners to costly repairs and voided warranties. Boat owners have already experienced these costs, facing expensive repairs or replacements due to higher blends of ethanol like E15.

The ethanol mandate and excessive, duplicative subsidies also negatively impact the food and commodities industries. Because a large share of the RFS is met with conventional corn-based ethanol, industries that rely on corn are increasingly vulnerable to price fluctuations. For example, when droughts or floods reduce crop yields, government ethanol mandates remain fixed, intensifying competition for remaining crops and driving up prices for livestock producers and others who purchase corn for animal feed. This, in turn, poses challenges across the food supply chain, creating higher costs for consumers. Although Congress envisioned advanced and non-food-based cellulosic biofuels making up a greater portion of the RFS mandate, production has fallen far short of expectations.

Finally, increased ethanol production driven by government subsidies and mandates contributes to habitat destruction and increased air and water pollution. Corn ethanol, the primary biofuel used to meet the RFS, may even increase greenhouse gas emissions. Current limits on the use of ethanol during the summer are intended to reduce the emission of smog-forming compounds from higher blends. These compounds worsen air quality and are potentially carcinogenic. Expanding E15 sales year-round would only worsen the negative impacts already experienced with corn ethanol and further entrench market distortions. Additional government intervention into the marketplace, bailouts, and subsidies will not provide long-term solutions for farmers or consumers.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose year-round expansion of E15. Markets should be guided by consumer choice, not shaped by mandates and billions of dollars in federal subsidies. It is time for Congress to reform the RFS and ethanol tax breaks, stop dictating outcomes in the fuel market, and stop forcing consumers, taxpayers, and the environment to bear the costs of failed ethanol policies.

Sincerely,

Earthjustice
Friends of the Earth
R Street Institute
The Boat Owners Association of The United States, BoatU.S

Environmental Working Group
National Taxpayers Union
Taxpayers for Common Sense

Cc: The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Hakem Jeffries, Minority Leader