

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Committee on Science, Space and Technology

The EPA Renewable Fuel Standard Mandate
Joint Subcommittee Hearing

July 23, 2015

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you to the witnesses for being here today. While I certainly appreciate your testimony, I must note that the panel today is not fully representative of the views on this topic. The Renewable Fuel Standard, or RFS, is a major policy enacted by Congress with complex implications for many businesses, the environment, and the economy as a whole.

Most importantly, we will not be hearing from either the EPA, the agency responsible for implementing the standard, or the Department of Energy, the lead agency for the federal government that conducts research into advanced biofuels.

There are real concerns about how the the RFS is being implemented, and we will need to hear from both EPA and DOE if we are to fulfill our oversight responsibilities.

It is fair to say that EPA has failed to implement the RFS for 2014 and 2015 in a timely fashion. This delay is due, in part, to the more than 300 thousand comments received on its original proposal in November 2013. According to EPA, these comments represented divergent views on a variety of topics such as the so-called “blendwall”, the extent to which it should use its waiver authorities, and the intent of Congress.

While I am not condoning the delay, I do understand the need to evaluate these comments, and it underscores the importance of hearing from EPA on this topic.

While there may be differing views on how best to implement the RFS, it is clear to me that this policy is an important tool for reducing our dependence on fossil fuels, reducing our nation’s greenhouse gas emissions, and encouraging innovation that is leading to the development of advanced, more sustainable alternative fuels.

In fact, on Monday, 36 Senators of both parties from 24 states sent a letter to Administrator McCarthy urging her to increase EPA’s advanced biodiesel volume requirements for 2016 and 2017 to better reflect the state of a growing domestic biodiesel industry.

Mr. Chairman, the Renewable Fuel Standard is a complicated issue, and I hope that this hearing today is not the end of our discussions on this matter.

With that I yield back.