

NFU NEWS RELEASE

(July 31, 2019) – Following the release of its disappointing 2020 renewable volume obligations (RVOs) under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today hosted a public hearing to gather feedback from farmers and other stakeholders on the proposed rule.

The proposal would maintain the current volume of corn ethanol currently required to be supplied to the transportation sector, and would only increase overall biofuel use by 120 million gallons. By contrast, the ongoing misappropriation of RFS small refinery exemptions (SREs) to multinational corporations has eliminated demand for biofuels by 2.6 billion gallons.

National Farmers Union (NFU) has consistently protested the rampant abuse of SREs by sending letters, submitting testimony, joining a lawsuit, and most recently filing a petition. The organization was dissatisfied that, when drafting next year's RVOs, the EPA ignored numerous requests to account for the damage inflicted on farmers and rural communities by the exemptions.

In a statement released today, NFU President Roger Johnson reiterated the organization's previous concerns and urged the administration to rectify the oversight in the finalized rule:

“Family farmers and ranchers are hurting right now. Between severely depressed commodity prices, chronic oversupply, environmental disasters, and trade wars, some operations are hemorrhaging money just to keep their doors open. But while farm country struggles, the oil industry continues to thrive, with many companies posting multi-billion-dollar profits year after year. Given these circumstances, it is unconscionable that the administration would funnel money away from family farms and into the pockets of large oil corporations.”

“Biofuels offer real solutions to the problems rural America is facing – they establish new uses for our corn surplus, lift up prices, create well-paying jobs, stimulate economic growth in rural communities, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, we have never had the chance to realize their full potential because EPA and this administration has repeatedly undercut the efficacy of the Renewable Fuel Standard with the flagrant mismanagement of these purported ‘hardship waivers.’ We’ve asked many times, in many different ways, that this destructive practice be immediately stopped, and that the losses already incurred be offset by next year’s renewable volume obligations. So far, our request has fallen on deaf ears – we will continue to advocate for stronger biofuels policies until they prioritize the social and economic welfare of family farmers and rural communities.”

###