

ActionAid USA * Alaska Wilderness League * Clean Air Task Force * Center for Biological Diversity * Earth Action, Inc. * Earthjustice * Friends of the Earth * Mighty Earth * National Wildlife Federation * Physicians for Social Responsibility * Rachel Carson Council * Safe Climate Campaign * Sierra Club * West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.

June 12, 2017

Dear Senators,

We write today on the behalf of our millions of supporters and members urging you to strongly oppose any attempt to expand the use of E15 (E15 is a mixture of 85% gasoline and 15% ethanol) during the ozone season. Increasing the proportion of ethanol in gasoline during the summer months can lead to more ozone pollution that will cause more smog in our communities. Ground-level ozone impairs lung functioning and contributes to increased incidences of asthma and other lung diseases, especially among children and the elderly.

While the ethanol industry sees this waiver as an opportunity to sell more of its product, it is really a debate about clean air and human health. The Environmental Protection Agency currently limits the use of ethanol during the summer precisely because of ethanol's greater emission of smog-forming compounds. These compounds make the air harder to breathe, are potentially carcinogenic, and have real impact on the people's lives. Waiving clean air standards at the behest of one favored industry would not only set a precedent for bad policy, it could cost lives.

The push for E15 has no basis in science and would do additional harm to our air, water, and land beyond increased ozone. Already, increased use of corn ethanol across the country has contributed to the conversion of more than 7 million acres of grassland and other habitats into crop productions, and has worsened water quality through additional polluted farm runoff. Moreover, according to the National Research Council, EPA data show corn ethanol "to have life-cycle GHG emissions higher than gasoline in 2012 or 2017 unless it is produced in a biorefinery that uses biomass as a heat source" (NRC 2011.) Increased production of corn ethanol—a likely outcome if E15 use is allowed year-round—would exacerbate these existing problems.

Now is not the time to increase the usage of E15 in our fuel supply, given that a shift to higher ethanol blends can exacerbate smog formation. Too many cities across the country already suffer from bad air days due to increased ground-level ozone.

We strongly urge you to reject any attempt to allow the year-round use of higher ethanol blends.

Sincerely,

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