United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 24, 2009

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 3426 ARN
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

We write today with regards to our nation's dangerous dependence on foreign oil and a pending decision before the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to approve an intermediate blend of ethanol for use in non-flex fuel vehicles.

As you know, our nation imports over 70 percent of its oil from foreign countries. Many of these oil imports originate in countries that are politically unstable or unfriendly to the United States. In 2007, Congress acted to reverse this trend as part of the Energy Independence and Security Act, which included a historic Renewable Fuels Standard of 36 billion gallons of renewable fuel by 2022. For 2009, the new RFS requires that 10.21 percent of our projected fuel supply come from renewable fuel. This percentage will steadily increase through 2022, creating jobs in rural America and reducing imports from foreign nations.

Currently, ethanol-blended gasoline is limited to a 10 percent blend for use in non-flex fuel vehicles. The 10 percent blend (E10) was established by a waiver to the Clean Air Act submitted in 1978. With the new RFS and the innovation and investment in our renewable fuels industry, domestic ethanol production is quickly saturating the market for E10 and will soon be oversupplying the limited market for non-flex fuel vehicles. This market limitation, known as the blend wall, is already impacting the ethanol industry with respect to investment in new biorefineries and second-generation biofuels.

Earlier this year a group of ethanol producers submitted a similar waiver asking the EPA to approve a higher percentage of ethanol blended gasoline between E10 and E15. While the production of flex fuel vehicles increases and the market for E85 grows, we believe an interim blend between E10 and E15 is necessary to meet the new RFS and keep our renewable fuels industry growing. Particularly as second generation biofuels are being developed and commercialized, it is important that we also support the steady expansion of markets for ethanol by moving to a higher percentage of ethanol blended gasoline in the near future.

We thank you for your prompt attention to this request and look forward to working with you as we grow our renewable fuels industry and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Sincerely,

George V. Voinovich

Eric Boyle

Roland W. Burris

Sherrod Brown

Byron L. Dorgan

Claire McCaskill

Dick Durbin