

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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Statement of Energy Subcommittee Chairman Randy Weber (R-Texas)
The EPA Renewable Fuel Standard Mandate

Chairman Weber: Good morning and welcome to today's Joint Energy and Oversight Subcommittee hearing examining the Renewable Fuel Standard, or RFS. Today, we will hear from witnesses with direct experience navigating this complex and outdated mandate.

The RFS was designed to increase the use of renewable sources of transportation fuels in order to reduce U.S. reliance on foreign oil and reduce vehicle emissions.

But Congress, when it enacted this mandate, based it on overly ambitious projections about gas consumption, availability of renewable fuel vehicles and infrastructure, bio-refinery technology, and the market demand for renewable fuels. In almost every category, the RFS projections are outdated and do not reflect today's energy market.

The RFS was wrong about gas consumption –demand for gasoline is falling. The RFS was wrong about the growth of the renewable fuel industry, particularly in terms of advanced biofuels and cellulosic fuels. And the RFS was wrong about the impact incorporating renewable fuels would have on the environment. As one of our witnesses today will testify, the corn ethanol produced to meet the RFS makes air quality worse, and has higher life cycle emissions than gasoline.

Today, instead of a transportation fuel supply driven by consumer demand, we are stuck with our back to the “blend wall.” Each year, the RFS requires higher volumes of renewable fuel than our transportation fuel supply can sustain. Even with EPA approval to use mid-level ethanol blends like E15 and E85 in select vehicles – both of which have significant problems in terms of performance and emissions – the RFS mandate is unworkable.

This leaves refiners at the mercy of unreliable annual waivers from the EPA that set the standard at achievable levels – when EPA even bothers to follow the law and announce requirements on time. And American consumers are stuck with higher prices and less options at the pump.

The RFS shows that the federal government cannot use mandates to create a functional industry out of thin air. Production of renewable fuels has increased, but demand for fuels with higher blends of ethanol simply does not exist, even in the most favorable market conditions. While the federal government has an important role in energy research and development, including in developing efficient transportation fuel technologies, federal mandates are the wrong approach to fueling innovation.

I want to thank our witnesses today for testifying on the challenges of the RFS in today's energy market, and I look forward to a discussion about the consequences caused by the federal government's

intervention in the American energy market. In the case of the RFS, like so many other instances of federal government mandates, the results are disastrous.

Congress has the opportunity to fix the problems caused by this outdated and misinformed law, and should advance legislation to repeal the RFS. We can't afford to high-jack economic growth by continuing with a law that is at odds with reality, and will raise costs for American consumers.

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