

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 17, 2018

The Honorable E. Scott Pruitt
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt,

We write to support and follow-up a letter sent to you by fifteen of our colleagues urging decisive action on an opportunity for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help accelerate investment in anaerobic digestion technology at agricultural sites across the country. By implementing the previously approved “electric pathway” within the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), the Agency would encourage broader adoption of anaerobic digesters (AD) at dairy, swine, and other livestock farms, as well as municipal wastewater treatment and food processing facilities. The program would therefore make those farms and local businesses more competitive, create reliable jobs for the rural workforce, and help prevent nutrient runoff from agricultural waste.

Farmers nationwide are environmental stewards that recognize the potential value of the nutrients and manure they produce. AD technology enables farms to use manure productively and mitigate runoff, and could therefore be a powerful tool in the fight to reduce the incidence of fish kills, harmful algal blooms and dead zones in critical watersheds across the country. In many cases, an AD can generate significant cost savings and even additional revenue for farmers.

Unfortunately, the cost of adoption remains prohibitive for many farms. Hundreds of farms already use ADs but thousands more could—a significant opportunity for innovation and investment in rural communities. In the states we represent, more than 1000 agricultural sites could use AD technology, according to USDA projections, and those ADs would support 1500 permanent jobs. Access to the RFS via the electric pathway would make the economics of those projects much more compelling, thereby attracting institutional investors and lowering the cost of capital, which in turn would accelerate adoption. In that way, the program would help our states realize the economic and environmental benefits of the technology.

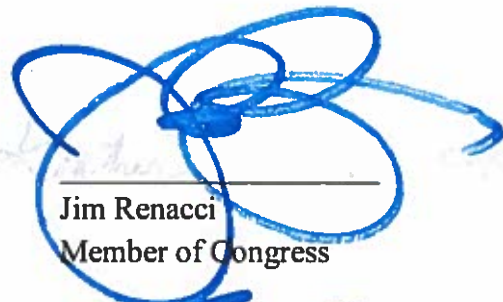
Much as our colleagues expressed in their previous letter, we have a range of opinions about the RFS, generally, but for the reasons described herein, we support the immediate implementation of the electric pathway under existing RFS regulations finalized in 2014. We believe EPA should prioritize approval of applications that would give small, farm-based AD facilities the option to access the program through a third party aggregator, and utilize data provided by vehicle manufacturers—the most robust data available—as the primary way to account for the consumption of electricity by electric vehicles. Combined, these two characteristics create the largest opportunity for farms to participate while still protecting the integrity of the RFS.

Please act decisively to ensure that dairy, swine, and other livestock farmers can begin participating in the RFS electric pathway in 2018. Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to contact us for additional information.

Sincerely,



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Jim Renacci
Member of Congress



Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Steve Stivers
Member of Congress



Chris Collins
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



David P. Joyce
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Katie Mc...