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Midwestern governors urge EPA to raise ethanol limit to E15

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Monday, July 20 is the deadline for submission of public comments to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on the “Green Jobs Waiver” to raise the federal limit on the amount of ethanol blended into gasoline from 10 percent (E10) up to 15 percent (E15). With this deadline nearing, ten Midwestern governors have sent a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson in support of EPA approval for E15.

The governors’ letter states that “the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA) sets a national goal of using 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2022. The current blend limit significantly hinders our ability to meet the long-term and intermediate targets of the renewable fuels standard (RFS). To meet this goal, we must continue to support the expanded use of conventional biofuels as a way to transition to developing commercially available advanced biofuels, including cellulosic ethanol.”

Supporting the call for E15, Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, chair of the Midwestern Governors Association (MGA), explained that “The Midwest has vast natural resources, the scientific know-how, and the skilled workforce necessary to lead the world in the production of climate-friendly biofuels. We must capitalize on these strengths in order to promote the use of low carbon fuels across the country.”

South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds, immediate past chair of the MGA, added that “Increasing the amount of ethanol blended into gasoline is an important step that will have dramatic, positive effects on advancement of the renewable fuels industry. In addition to economic benefits, increased use of ethanol and biofuels will lead to greater energy independence by utilizing homegrown commodities, materials and technologies.”

In addition to Granholm and Rounds, the letter was signed by Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn, Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, Iowa Gov. Chester J. Culver, Kansas Gov. Mark Parkinson, Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, North Dakota Gov. John Hoeven, Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland and Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle.

The governors’ letter warns that “Immediate action is necessary to ensure that this entirely domestic energy industry is preserved and allowed to take us to a new energy economy by creating new ‘green’ jobs.” It notes that Minnesota is testing using a 20

percent blend and that “Research to date has shown that this has not posed performance problems.”

An earlier letter of support for E15 from the North American Equipment Dealers Association (NAEDA) stated that “We believe increasing the amount of ethanol produced and used will create green jobs, provide environmental benefits, help reduce our dependence on foreign oil and enhance the quality of life in rural America through development of our natural resources.” NAEDA wrote EPA that “We strongly disagree with opponents of the waiver and their contentions that science-based information to support higher ethanol blends is lacking or that higher blends will contribute to the failure of motor vehicle engines, pollution control equipment and smaller gasoline-powered equipment.”

To read the July 8th Midwestern governors’ letter to EPA, go to:
http://www.midwesterngovernors.org/resolutions/Blend_wall.pdf

To read the June 16th North American Equipment Dealers Association’ letter, go to:
<http://www.growthenergy.org/studies/6.23.09.NAEDA.pdf>

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