

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

August 7, 2015

The Honorable Ernest Moniz
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Moniz:

We write to you regarding the Department of Energy's (DOE) proposed study entitled Advanced Biofuel Blends in Small Engines. We support studying this issue, but request that DOE conduct the study in an independent, objective, and wholly scientific manner.

DOE's 2009-10 Catalyst Study on the effects of E-15 gas on automobiles raised concerns from consumer and industry groups. Organizations including, but not limited to, the Milk Producers Council, Friends of the Earth, American Petroleum Institute, American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, National Turkey Federation, Outdoor Power Equipment Institute and the National Black Chamber of Commerce cosigned a letter addressing this issue¹. Meanwhile, the Renewable Fuels Association stated that the Coordinating Research Council's (CRC) study on E-15 was flawed². DOE also stated that the CRC's study was deeply flawed³.

To prevent the Advanced Biofuel Blends in Small Engines study from becoming a political football, DOE should partner with the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to conduct research on this topic. The NAS will provide independent and objective advice to DOE that would satisfy interested parties and stakeholders.

As Members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology your answers to the following questions may be helpful as we conduct oversight of your research on advanced biofuel blends in small engines. Please answer the following questions by August 27, 2015.

1. Do you agree that there was a significant amount of concern regarding studies on the effects of E-15 in automobiles, including the DOE and CRC studies?
2. What is the best way to conduct an independent, objective and scientific study on advanced biofuel blends in small engines?
3. How much do you estimate that a study on this issue will cost?

¹ Coalition Letter on H.R. 3199.

http://sensenbrenner.house.gov/uploadedfiles/20120203_e15_sensenbrenner_letter_final.pdf. February 6, 2012.

² Peterka, Amanda. "Study Backed By Oil Industry Find E15 Damages Automobile Fuel Systems." *E&E Publishing, LLC* January 29, 2013. <http://www.eenews.net/stories/1059975477>.

³ Department of Energy. "Getting it Right: Accurate Testing and Assessments Critical to Deploying the Next Generation of Auto Fuels." May 16, 2012. <http://energy.gov/articles/getting-it-right-accurate-testing-and-assessments-critical-deploying-next-generation-auto>.

4. What are your goals for the small engine study?
5. Would it be unusual for DOE to partner with NAS on a scientific study?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.
Chairman Emeritus
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology



Barry Loudermilk
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight



Randy Weber
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy



Jim Bridenstine
Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment