

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Hearing on “Overview of the Renewable Fuel Standard”
July 23, 2013**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

This morning’s hearing is entitled “Overview of the Renewable Fuel Standard: Stakeholder Perspectives,” and continues our committee’s assessment of the RFS. Over the course of this year, we have taken a comprehensive and deliberate approach to reviewing the RFS, which began with a series of bipartisan white papers that solicited input from interested stakeholders on major aspects of the program. The response has been overwhelming and very helpful to the process, and I would like to thank everyone who participated.

We conducted our initial hearing on June 26, which focused on the government agencies chiefly responsible for implementing the RFS. The EPA, EIA, and USDA all agreed that many things have changed since the RFS was last revised in 2007. For example, we are using considerably less gasoline today than we did then. Yet the RFS is still based on the assumptions of 2007 and not the realities of 2013.

And all three agencies agreed that there are RFS implementation issues that warrant serious attention, especially as we look to 2014. We need to pay attention to these warnings.

Today and tomorrow, we take another important step in the review process by hearing from 16 stakeholder witnesses offering a wide range of perspectives on the RFS. Refiners, renewable fuel producers, environmentalists, automakers, small engine makers, fuel retailers, corn growers, poultry raisers, restaurant owners, consumers and others will all explain where we are today with the RFS and what the future may hold.

And I am pleased to welcome, as part of the second panel, Todd Teske of Briggs & Stratton which manufactures small engines back in my district.

Today’s first panel will focus on the impact of the RFS on fuel production, while the second will focus on fuel sales and use. And tomorrow’s panel will address the impact on the agricultural sector and the food supply.

Despite the differing points of view from which stakeholders come to this issue, it is my hope that with today’s hearing we can start a process of consensus building on a path forward for the RFS. This includes potential adjustments to the RFS that align the program with current energy realities.

Many businesses and many jobs are at stake - from corn farmer to refinery worker to gas station employee to lawnmower maker to ethanol plant worker. And, just as important, the interests of consumers are directly impacted by the RFS. The end goal of this process is an RFS that works as best as possible for everyone.

###