

Governors' Ethanol Coalition

March 23, 2001

Honorable Christine Todd Whitman, Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
401 M Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Whitman:

Pending before your agency is a request from the California Air Resources Board for a waiver from the reformulated gasoline oxygen requirement of the Clean Air Act. Governor Holden and I respectfully request that you deny the board's waiver request.

We believe that California has significantly underestimated the positive air quality benefits resulting from California reformulated gasoline, but we recognize the significant water contamination problem that California faces from MTBE. A more flexible and comprehensive approach to the use of oxygenates like ethanol may be in the best interests of not only California, but also the entire nation.

Last year, the Governors' Ethanol Coalition worked with the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management to address this problem from a national perspective. Our hope is that we can duplicate those efforts again during this session of Congress. Taking action on the waiver at this time will make it very difficult to adopt a national solution to this complex and difficult issue and will perpetuate the harm that MTBE imposes on our water resources, while potentially allowing an increase in harmful air pollution.

The Coalition will continue to work with the ethanol industry, National Corn Growers Association, Northeast States, environmental groups, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and other interested parties to develop legislation to address these issues.

Sincerely,

Mike Johanns  
Governor of Nebraska and Chair