



August 8, 2022

Governor Gavin Newsom
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Liane Randolph, Chair
Members of the Board
California Air Resources Board
1001 "I" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Submitted electronically via

https://www.arb.ca.gov/lispub/comm/iframe_bcsbform.php?listname=lcfs-wkshp-jul22-ws&comm_period=1

Re: July 7 Public Workshop to Discuss Potential Changes to the Low Carbon Fuel Standard

Esteemed Governor Newsom, Chair Randolph and Members of the Board:

Biofuelwatch¹ is an international organization that works to increase public understanding and civic engagement on the land-use implications of climate policy. We have a particular focus on the environmental harms and social inequities of large-scale industrial bioenergy projects, and we work extensively on addressing the negative ecological and social outcomes of policy and actions that are justified as being beneficial to the global climate, yet carry with them risks and threats to public health and natural resources. This brief letter is provided by our organization to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) as comment on the July 7 Public Workshop to Discuss Potential Changes to the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (Workshop).

Soy is the New Palm

CARB staff have been resistant to recognize the growing body of evidence regarding the environmental and social harms arising from the use of soy as a feedstock for making liquid biofuels such as Renewable Diesel and Sustainable Aviation Fuel. Nevertheless, in Europe the dynamics are different, as public concern regarding the use of high deforestation risk commodities for making fuels is beginning to manifest in legislative action.

Earlier this year industry committee members at the European Parliament voted to restrict soy oil as a feedstock for biofuel production. This action will place the crop in the same category as palm oil in the EU. It is unquestionable that Members of the European Parliament took the decision due to public and civil society concerns over the environmental impact of soy cultivation in countries outside of Europe, in particular South America. Notably, lawmakers additionally want to bring forward the start of the phase-

¹ <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/>

out date for palm oil and soy – currently set at 2030 – to apply as soon as the directive enters into force, possibly as soon as the coming year.

“Palm oil and soya may no longer be counted towards the quota for first-generation biofuels as soon as the directive enters into force,” said Markus Pieper, a German MEP who steered the proposed legislation through Parliament was quoted as saying in industry press reports².

The industry committee’s position on the updated renewable energy directive was adopted overwhelmingly with 54 votes in favor, 14 against, and 6 abstentions. Though the committee’s position is not yet law, as it must first be approved by the full European Parliament in a plenary vote, indications are that prospects are good for passage of the measure. The Parliament vote is set to take place during the 12-15 September plenary session in Strasbourg.

Note that this measure as proposed in the EU is not requiring a cap on certain feedstocks, it is requiring a phase out altogether of those feedstocks. Capping feedstocks and fuels may qualify as incremental change in the right direction, but inevitably science-based policy will require that soy-based liquid biofuels no longer be characterized as beneficial to the climate.

It is time for CARB to take the needed step to admit that there is no place for incentivizing the utilization of soy as a feedstock for liquid biofuels and that soy-based liquid biofuels are not a climate solution. Burning food for fuel is morally and ethically dubious, and the science shows that the climate benefits are illusory. We implore CARB to take the necessary steps to address the incorrect characterization of this unjust and environmentally destructive dead end as a ‘low carbon’ fuel, and remove soy-based liquid fuels as an element of state planning in pursuit of so-called ‘decarbonization.’

Sincerely,



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² <https://biofuels-news.com/news/soy-oil-set-to-follow-palm-as-crop-faces-biofuel-feedstock-restrictions/>