

With the worst drought in 50 years pushing feed prices higher and adding to the struggles of Vermont dairy farmers, Rep. Peter Welch is urging Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa Jackson to bring relief by relaxing the mandate that requires the blending of ethanol in U.S. transportation fuel.

Welch and a bipartisan group of 156 lawmakers – 30 Democrats and 126 Republicans – want Jackson to reduce or waive the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), which requires that 10 percent of all transportation fuel in the U.S. come from corn-based ethanol. Producing that much ethanol can consume up to 40 percent of the U.S. corn supply. And with the drought causing expected yields to plummet and prices to soar – price forecasts are up nearly 40 percent in a month – Welch and his colleagues are urging the EPA to act now.

"This is common sense. Corn prices are surging and Vermont dairy farmers are struggling. Whatever we can do to bring relief amidst the worst drought in 50 years we should do," Welch said. "I'd like to eliminate the ethanol mandate forever, but let's at least waive it temporarily for struggling farmers in this extremely difficult drought."

Welch has been a House leader working to end the unprecedented taxpayer support enjoyed by the ethanol industry, which includes the RFS and a protective import tariff of \$0.54 per gallon. An additional \$.045 per gallon tax credit for ethanol producers – which was in place for over 30 years and amounted to a \$6 billion taxpayer expenditure in 2010 – was ended by Congress in January.

The EPA has opened a 30-day public comment period on the request to waive the RFS. To see the letter Welch and his colleagues sent to EPA Administrator Jackson, [CLICK HERE](#) .