

**ActionAid International USA \* Bread for the World  
Center for Food Safety \* Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach  
Community Food Security Coalition \* Food First \* Food Systems Integrity  
Food & Water Watch \* Friends of the Earth  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concern  
National Catholic Rural Life Conference \* The Oakland Institute  
Oxfam America \* Rural Coalition \* Virginia Interfaith Power & Light  
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy \* WHY Hunger**

August 27, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Chairman, Environment and Public Works  
Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman, Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  
Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman  
Chairman, Energy and Natural Resources  
Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Boxer, Bingaman and Harkin:

We write to you as hunger, development, environment and religious organizations concerned about the impacts of expanding demand for biofuels on global hunger. **We oppose any attempt to weaken the Renewable Fuel Standard's definition of life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions of biofuels and to exclude emissions from indirect land-use change.**

Last year, world markets were shaken by a sharp rise in food prices. The demand for biofuels was an important factor in this increase, both because of its impact on corn prices and because the diversion of croplands into biofuels production led to increases in prices for wheat and other grains. The International Food Policy Research Institute has estimated that it accounted for 30% of the rise in grain prices. Several months ago, more than 170 scientists, including a number of Nobel Laureates, wrote to the California Air Resources Board supporting its proposal to include indirect land use changes in the calculation of lifecycle analysis of biofuels.

While commodity prices have fallen along with the contraction in global markets, we continue to hear from our partners in developing countries that the growing international demand for biofuels has created new challenges for food security and land use. In Guatemala, for example, the dramatic expansion of land under cultivation for sugarcane and palm oil has resulted in concentration of land ownership and displacement of tenant farmers from plantations being consolidated for this new investment. In Senegal, a country that experienced riots last year because of rising food prices, the expansion of biofuels production has created new pressures on community lands and forests. In country after country, we hear both that cropland is being

directly converted to biofuels production and that forests and other so-called “marginal” lands are being used to produce fuel feedstocks, leading farmers to shift food production elsewhere.

The complexity of these interactions does not change the basic fact that indirect land use changes from biofuels are real. We welcome the proposal released by the EPA last spring to utilize scientific methodologies to measure these indirect land use changes and to include them in the life-cycle assessments of greenhouse gas emissions from biofuels. The inclusion of that requirement in the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act was a prudent action to deal with a rapidly evolving issue.

Our organizations are deeply concerned about increasing global hunger. We are worried both that escalating international demand for agricultural products is distorting land use decisions, and that increasing climate variability resulting from global warming is creating dire new threats to food production. The development of renewable energy sources must contribute to solving, not worsening, these problems. **We urge you to maintain the current definitions of life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions, including indirect land use changes, in the Renewable Fuels Standards requirements.** Only by better understanding the real impacts of biofuels production can we arrive at solutions that work for farmers, consumers and environments around the world.

Sincerely,

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**WHY Hunger**

CC: US Senate