It should be big news in an election year that the Governor of Pennsylvania is appealing to President Trump and the EPA for the third time seeking Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) relief on behalf of his state's refiners.

In 2017, Governor Tom Wolf wrote to President Trump regarding his "concern that the high cost of compliance with the Renewable Fuel Standard Renewable Identification Number (RIN) credit is undermining the continued viability of the oil refining sector in the Northeast."

In 2018, the governor followed with another petition for relief, noting that "since 2009, seven East Coast refineries have closed and production capacity has declined by roughly a third. Compliance with the increasingly costly RFS standard, which constitutes one of their most significant operating expenses, has been a major cause of the decline."

Now in 2020, Gov. Wolf is weighing in again, urging EPA to waive some portion of RFS compliance obligations for refiners. "The ever-increasing volume levels set by EPA are severely harming the economies of both the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the entire East Coast region. Merchant refiners such as those in Pennsylvania are struggling to maintain viability under current volume requirements. These refineries face RFS compliance costs that exceed their payroll costs, and, as a result, refiners have laid off employees, reduced benefits, and delayed capital projects. The economic burdens imposed by the RFS volume requirements are unsustainable for refiners operating on tight margins."

Since the Governor first wrote to President Trump regarding the RFS, Pennsylvania's refining industry has contracted, and good Pennsylvania manufacturing jobs have been lost. There has been no RFS relief for the state. Where previous requests have gone unanswered by the EPA, perhaps this year the Governor will receive a response. He is the sixth Governor to request that EPA exercise its general waiver authority to reduce RFS compliance burdens this year. The Governors of Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Wyoming and Utah — working for the economic health of their states and regions — cannot be ignored.

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Media Contact:

Ericka Perryman

media@afpm.org

202.457.0480

About AFPM:

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