



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on October 16, 2011

EPA Biofuel Mandates Intensify World Hunger

CEI and ActionAid filed their complaint under the federal Data Quality Act, claiming that EPA glossed over the negative human and economic impacts of its recent biofuel regulations. In fact, the complaint points out that EPA's published analysis of its ethanol mandates does not even mention resulting hunger and starvation. Moreover, the claimants attest the analysis erroneously minimizes the mandates' economic impacts.

For example, EPA predicted a decrease in world food consumption of only 0.04 percent and "a relatively modest increase in annual household food costs associated with the higher prices commanded by corn and soybeans." Yet the complaint cites a peer-reviewed study published earlier this year that found EPA's biofuel mandates have severely aggravated chronic hunger and poverty in poor areas. It estimated at least 192,000 deaths from the regulations, exceeding the World Health Organization's estimate of annual deaths from global warming by 51,000. The study concluded, "Thus, policies intended to mitigate global warming may actually have increased death and disease in developing countries."



Others have been decrying biofuel mandates since 2008 due to their human and environmental impacts. Henri Josserand of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) explained food represents as much as 60 to 80 percent of consumer spending in developed countries. Drastic changes as EPA has enacted force people in those nations into extreme poverty and incite deadly food riots. South African finance minister Trevor Manuel called the mandates "criminal." Indian Finance Minister Chidambaram harshly criticized the measures, noting "in a world where there is hunger and poverty, there is no policy justification for diverting food crops towards bio-fuels."

Environmental groups are also against biofuel mandates that create incentives for significant changes in land use. The resulting deforestation and erosion is destroying habitats of endangered species and devastating jungles which form the world's largest carbon sink.

The problem stems from the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act requiring EPA to increase the use of biofuels. EPA revised its regulatory requirements accordingly and issued its economic analysis. The CEI/ActionAid complaint filed on October 13 demands EPA correct these mistakes to ensure the public is informed about the number of deaths the agency has caused, as well as economic and



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environmental impacts. It called attention to EPA's own Data Quality Guidelines requiring corrections of any published information that does not meet "basic standards of quality, including objectivity, utility and integrity."

"With poor people in developing countries spending between 50-80% of their income on food, it is no surprise that 44 million people fell into extreme poverty from June 2010-February 2011 because of high food prices," stated Marie Brill, Senior Policy Analyst at ActionAid USA, in a [press release](#) announcing the complaint. "The big surprise is that the EPA still fails to acknowledge the human impact of the Renewable Fuel Standard and still refuses to cite the plethora of reports that reveal the significant role of biofuels in global food price volatility."

When he filed the complaint, CEI General Counsel Sam Kazman declared, "EPA's refusal to address this issue has gone on long enough, and there isn't a more appropriate time for the agency to change its approach than in the wake of World Food Day." October 16 marks the 30th annual event which commemorates the founding of FAO. It involves community-driven events designed to call attention to areas of the world plagued by hunger.

CEI, a public policy think-tank, and ActionAid, a social justice organization, are non-profits headquartered in Washington, D.C.



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