UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

AUG 04 2017

OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

The Honorable Peter Welch
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Welch:

Thank you for your letter of May 5, 2017, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regarding the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) program and the status of the Triennial Report to Congress and the anti-backsliding study that are required under the Clean Air Act.

As your letter notes, EPA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) released a report titled *EPA Has Not Met Certain Statutory Requirements to Identify Environmental Impacts of Renewable Fuel Standard* (Report No. 16-P-0275) late last year. In response to this report the EPA committed to completing the next triennial report to Congress on the environmental impacts of biofuels by December 31, 2017. The agency is currently on track to complete the report by that date.

With respect to the anti-backsliding study required under Section 211(q)(1) of the Clean Air Act, EPA acknowledged our obligation under the law. EPA already has taken a number of steps that are important prerequisites for the study. However, as the OIG report correctly notes, there are multiple intermediate research steps that still need to be completed before EPA can plan, fund, and conduct a comprehensive anti-backsliding study. These steps include development of baseline, current, and projected scenarios for how renewable fuels have and might be produced, distributed, and used to fulfill the RFS requirements; generation of emissions inventories; and air quality modeling: all of which are time-consuming and resource-intensive. This work must be conducted on top of other statutorily-required actions under the RFS. EPA expects to meet the timeframe that we committed to in the OIG report.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Patricia Haman in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at haman.patricia@epa.gov or (202) 564-2806.

Sincerely,

Sarah Dunham
Acting Assistant Administrator