



THE COMING FIGHT OVER SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUELS

Only High Integrity Fuels Can Avoid Dangerous Side Effects

A new climate law offers a big boost to sustainable aviation fuels – but the details matter. The Biden administration must avoid subsidizing fuels whose production would do more harm to than good.

Aircraft emissions are an important source of climate pollution

If aviation were a country, it would be one of the world's top 10 sources of greenhouse gas emissions. And demand for air travel is growing.

Sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) can cut airline emissions

Sustainable aviation fuels, which are mixed with conventional jet fuels, can be produced from readily available agricultural, forestry or other waste materials like used cooking oil. Some synthetic “e-fuels” are produced from surplus renewable electricity, water, hydrogen or even carbon dioxide extracted directly from the earth's atmosphere.

The Inflation Reduction Act can jump-start SAF production and use

The Inflation Reduction Act includes tax credits to promote the use and production of sustainable aviation fuels that result in at least 50 percent less greenhouse gas emissions than petroleum-based jet fuel.

Not all sustainable aviation fuels are created equal

SAF requiring accelerated growth of crops like corn and soy could trigger a net increase in greenhouse gas emissions because of the cutting of forests and digging up of grasslands required to support this type of SAF production. The resulting effects could threaten food supplies, natural habitats, and irreplaceable forests, grassland and wetlands.

The administration must ensure taxpayer dollars don't support the wrong fuels

Executive branch regulations -- involving the Treasury Department with input from EPA and the Departments of Transportation, Energy and Agriculture -- will be written this year to implement the SAF-related tax credits. Every fuel source seeking taxpayer support must be assessed to account for the “lifecycle pollution” created by its production and use. Federal sustainability standards must include safeguards against damage to our communities and ecosystems.

There's only one chance to get this right

The Biden Administration has worked hard to keep its promise of seeking science-based climate policies that support economic growth. Subsidizing the wrong SAF could hurt U.S. industry in new markets for low-carbon aircraft and hydrogen-based fuels. We can't afford to put new pressures on our food supply that drive up prices or cause shortages. After years of struggle, it's time to get this right – so that we don't trade one environmental threat for another.

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