

BRAG Biobased Products Blog: June 21, 2019

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DOE Announces Waves To Water Prize Competition

On June 13, 2019, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced the launch of the first stage of the [Waves to Water Prize](#). A competition seeking to accelerate the development of wave energy-powered desalination systems and address water security, the prize consists of four stages. The first concept stage is now open for applications until **September 11, 2019**. U.S. Under Secretary of Energy, Mark W. Menezes, stated that “[t]he start of the Waves to Water Prize marks an important step toward driving growth and progress in the marine energy sector as well as spurring innovation to develop desalination technologies that will have a global impact.” DOE is offering winners up to \$2.5 million in prizes for the advancement of their solutions. From concept, to technical design, to creating a prototype, the competing systems will produce clean water using only waves as power sources. This first stage includes \$200,000 in prizes with up to \$10,000 for up to 20 winners. Led by DOE’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) Water Power Technologies Office, the competition seeks interdisciplinary solutions that are modular and easily transportable, ultimately serving clean water needs for remote communities or disaster relief scenarios. Guidelines for application submissions can be found [here](#).

U.S. Senators Introduce Bipartisan Act Aiming To Increase Small Refinery Exemptions Transparency

On June 14, 2019, U.S. Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) introduced the [Renewable Fuel Standard \(RFS\) Integrity Act of 2019](#). This Act aims at increasing transparency and predictability to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) small refinery exemption process under the RFS program. Requiring small refineries to petition for exemptions by June 1 of each year, according to the two leaders, this legislation would hold EPA accountable for exempted gallons in the annual Renewable Volume Obligation (RVO) it sets every November. It is known that, since 2018, many complaints have been made regarding President Trump’s EPA liberally providing exemptions to refineries with no back-up information or congressional oversight. This Act attempts to address this issue by making key information associated with exemptions made publicly available. Additionally, if passed, the Act would require EPA to report to Congress on the methodology it uses when granting these small refinery exemptions.

EDF Publishes Report On Trump EPA’s Implementation Of The Lautenberg Act

The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) announced on June 17, 2019, a report entitled [Toxic Consequences: Trump’s attacks on chemical safety put our health at risk](#). EDF notes that “[c]oncern over toxic exposures and a lack of confidence in the badly outdated chemical safety system” led to Congress passing the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act (Lautenberg Act) to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The bipartisan bill “finally” gave EPA “the power to strengthen health protections for American families and the



Article By
[Lynn L. Bergeson](#)
[Bergeson & Campbell, P.C.](#)
[Brag Biobased Products Blog](#)
[Biotech, Food, Drug](#)
[Environmental, Energy & Resources](#)
[Utilities & Transport](#)
[All Federal](#)

environment.” EDF claims that the Trump Administration “is seeking to dismantle the new authorities and mandates under the law with the goal of shifting policies to serve the chemical industry’s agenda,” however. According to EDF, EPA has taken the following actions that undermine the Lautenberg Act:

- Approving new chemicals without regard for the law or public health;
- Ignoring real-life exposures when evaluating risks of existing chemicals; and
- Blocking or weakening bans of toxic chemicals.

EDF concludes that “without a drastic change to EPA’s current direction on chemical safety, we will be forced to endure the toxic consequences of its mistakes for decades to come.”

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