

New Research Shows Major US Airline and Biofuel Industries Push for Weaker US Sustainable Aviation Fuel Policy

Industry lobbying policymakers for weaker rules for sustainable aviation fuels (SAFs) qualifying for government incentives that may harm decarbonization efforts

A new *InfluenceMap report* highlights how the US airline and biofuel industries are lobbying policymakers to weaken federal and state-level sustainability rules for SAFs, which risk promoting SAFs with potentially dangerous climate side effects.

The research focuses on the five largest airlines in the US – American, Delta, United, Southwest, and JetBlue, alongside Airlines for America (A4A) and the Renewable Fuels Association (RFA) - the leading industry groups for the US aviation and ethanol industries.

Airlines strongly support SAFs as the primary, near-term solution to decarbonize the aviation industry without reducing demand. Yet InfluenceMap research shows how the US aviation industry and ethanol industries are working together to undermine the integrity of federal sustainability criteria for SAFs.

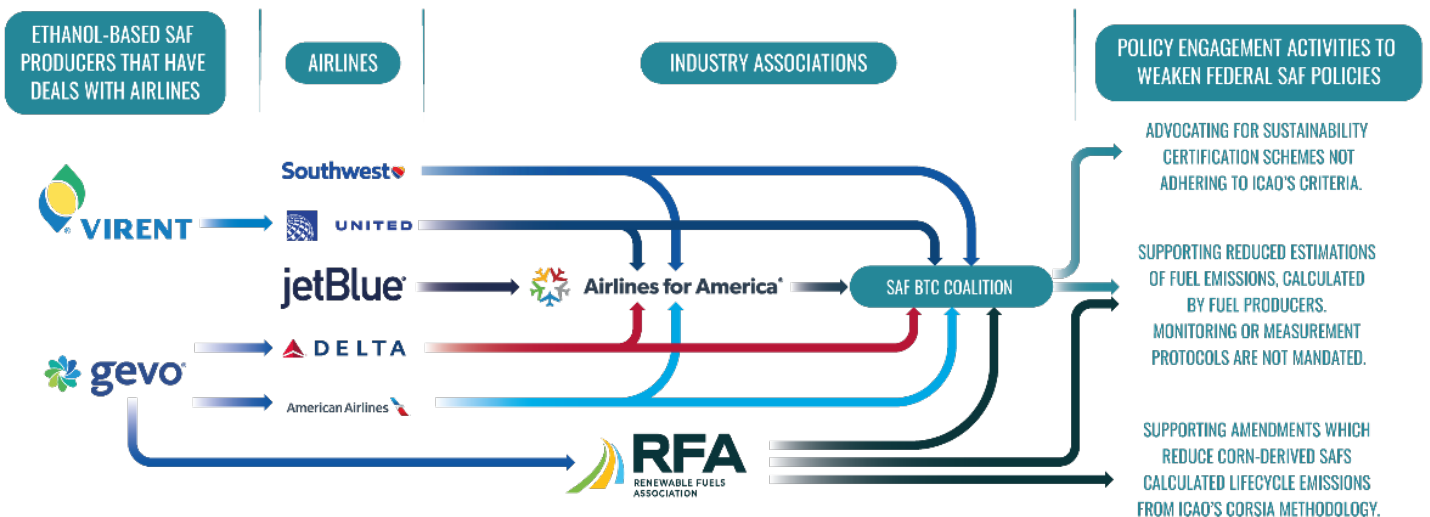
InfluenceMap analyst Lucca Ewbank said: "Industrial lobbying to weaken these rules calls into question the integrity of airlines' public pronouncements promoting SAFs as essential to meet their net-zero 2050 commitment".

"It also increases the chances that airlines receive millions in taxpayer-funded credits for using crop-based SAFs, rather than promoting novel lower-carbon fuels that are crucial to aviation's long-term decarbonization efforts."

*"This is despite warnings by the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)* that large-scale production of biofuel crops risks the destruction of forests and grasslands, significantly reducing their greenhouse gas reduction potential, urging safeguards to limit such impacts."*

Such engagement forms a pattern of negative lobbying from the aviation sector, as A4A has urged amendments that allow SAFs with higher emissions to be eligible under SAF policies in California and Oregon.

INDUSTRY'S LOBBYING ON FEDERAL SAF POLICY



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Key findings from the report include:

- The 'SAF BTC Coalition', whose membership includes key US airlines and biofuels groups, has pushed for weaker federal policy rules for incentives that may potentially promote the use of corn-ethanol fuels.
- The Renewable Fuels Association has advocated for amendments to the federal SAF blenders tax credit and Clean Fuel Producers Credit which are likely to make corn-ethanol SAFs eligible for government incentives under the policies.
- A4A has advocated to increase the carbon intensity threshold for SAFs under Oregon's Clean Fuels Program, enabling fuels with higher lifecycle emissions to be eligible for credits under the policy, with Oregon later adopting similar rules.
- A4A has lobbied against reforms to increase the ambition of California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard. This includes pushing for a higher carbon intensity threshold for SAFs, enabling fuels with greater lifecycle emissions to be eligible under the policy, and opposing a cap on crop-based biofuels.

Responding to the report, **Co-Director of the ITS-Davis Low Carbon Fuel Policy Research Initiative at UC Davis, Dr. Colin Murphy said:** *"The U.S. Federal Government, along with many states, have adopted ambitious policies to reduce GHG emissions from aviation fuels. These policies must be implemented effectively, and be based on rigorous, evidence-based analysis if they are to achieve their fullest potential for reducing GHG emissions. It is important to understand how these policies are implemented as we seek to build momentum for further reductions in GHG emissions. It is clear that innovative new technologies will have to emerge for us to achieve the goal of carbon-neutral air travel, and so immensely helpful to understand where policies incentivize the preservation of the status quo. This report sheds valuable light on an often-overlooked part of policy*

implementation and can help support continued progress in this space."

For more information and to read the full analysis, click below.

[Click here for the full briefing](#)

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