

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard
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Subject: Two EPW Republicans wary of Wehrum support for biofuels

By Anthony Adragna

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Two Republicans on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee wouldn't commit today to backing Bill Wehrum's nomination to run EPA's air office, citing concerns about his support for biofuels policy — and raising the prospect that their meeting this afternoon with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt could determine his fate.

"Sen. [Joni] Ernst does not believe she received straightforward answers from Mr. Wehrum during the hearing, and she would like more clarity from him and Administrator Pruitt on how they will enforce the Clean Air Act — specifically the RFS," a spokeswoman for Ernst told POLITICO, referring to the Renewable Fuel Standard.

Asked whether she would support the nomination, Deb Fischer told POLITICO: "I think I'll know more about that after I meet with the administrator."

Republicans hold an 11-10 majority over Democrats on the committee, so just one GOP defection would sink the Wehrum nomination. The panel is slated to vote on four EPA nominations Wednesday morning.

Another EPW Republican from a major corn state, South Dakota Sen. Mike Rounds, told reporters he would back Wehrum. He plans to attend the meeting with Pruitt this afternoon.

WHAT'S NEXT: A group of corn-state senators is scheduled to meet with Pruitt this afternoon. Wehrum's nomination is scheduled for a vote in EPW Wednesday morning.

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