

Ethanol plant restrictions may be lifted

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Plants that make ethanol may be able to run with fewer environmental rules and less pollution control equipment, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported.

The Bush administration is considering relaxing restrictions, which would allow the plants to create more air pollution to curb oil imports, the newspaper said.

The Environmental Protection Agency often has to fight attempts to curb pollution from ethanol production, but as of March 22 the agency is reversing course.

The EPA sent the proposed rule change for final review by the White House Office of Management and Budget. EPA spokesman John Millett said he expects the process to be completed by the end of April.

Neither agency would comment on what the final rule may look like, or whether the administration is committed to making the change.

However, since the administration has indicated its full support for ethanol, industry insiders are confident the EPA will proceed with the new rule, the newspaper said, even though there have been complaints from environmental advocates and local officials.

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