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Inglis pushes for more ethanol

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GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. should follow Brazil's lead in using ethanol for transportation fuel, Rep. Bob Inglis said Thursday on a congressional tour of the South American country.

Inglis, R-Travelers Rest, said ethanol provides 45 percent of Brazil's transportation fuel. The rest of the country's energy needs are met by its own oil production, he said.

Brazil has been subsidizing and investing in ethanol since the 1970s and is now energy independent, said Inglis.

"If a country that big can figure out how to get energy independent, surely the United States can," he said. "We need to make scientific investments that will pay dividends and this one can clearly pay a huge national security dividend, create jobs and clean up the environment."

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Ethanol is cheaper in Brazil than gasoline, he said, and the country no longer subsidizes the fuel. But it requires that all fuel contain at least 25 percent ethanol.

Brazil makes ethanol from sugar cane, a better source than corn, which is used predominantly in the U.S., Inglis said. Brazil, the U.S. and other countries still are looking for a breakthrough technology that would allow them to make ethanol from switch grass, corn stalks or other plant waste.

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