



**Testimony of Adam Gardner**

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**Before the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming**

**“The Gas Greener: The Future of Biofuels”**

**October 24, 2007**

Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Sensenbrenner and ladies and gentlemen of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify. It’s an honor to be part of the dialogue on global warming. As a musician who spends most of his time either on the road in a tour bus or on stage in a t-shirt, I also thank you for the opportunity to wear my suit to something other than a wedding or a funeral.

My band Guster started touring 14 years ago from our home base in Boston. We started in a small van and eventually graduated to a tour bus and an 18-wheel truck for our equipment. We knew our tours consumed a lot of fuel –and you can only nickname your tour bus the “Earth Eater” for so long before making a change. We wanted our actions to match our beliefs, and I talked to a lot of other bands that felt the same way. They just didn’t know where to start.

In response, my wife Lauren Sullivan, who has been working in the environmental community as long as I’ve been playing in a rock band, decided to create Reverb, a non-profit organization dedicated to **educating and engaging musicians and their fans** to promote environmental sustainability.

Over the past few years, we've worked with over 45 major national tours to implement a laundry list of greening efforts that reduce waste and carbon emissions backstage while simultaneously educating and activating concertgoers through a festival-like Eco-Village out front.

Reverb also launched the "Campus Consciousness Tour," now in its third year, to bring our unique environmental program to college campuses across the country while adding daytime activities such as open Town Hall Forums with band members, student groups, faculty, and administrators to discuss sustainability on campus and what students can do to make a difference.

To date, Reverb's efforts have reduced CO2 emissions by more than **25 thousand tons**, facilitated the use of over **250 thousand gallons of biodiesel**, involved more than **14 hundred local and national environmental groups** in the Reverb Eco-Village, and reached more than **4.4 million concertgoers** face-to-face. Reverb has "greened" tours for Dave Matthews Band, Norah Jones, Red Hot Chili Peppers and many more.

Reverb's **biodiesel** efforts seem to spark the most interest and conversation on the road with everyone from truck drivers to record label executives. I suppose this is because biodiesel appeals to so many different stakeholders and has a wide array of possible uses and benefits. Biodiesel allows us to power vehicles while also protecting the environment, facilitate our independence from dangerous foreign oil dictatorships, and can support jobs in local and rural communities. The use of biodiesel is radically changing the music touring industry, and there's no reason why we couldn't continue to broaden its reach.

Ideally, some day soon our fans will drive to concerts in biofuel cars of their own--plug-in hybrids would be cool too.

For Guster, making strides toward kicking our own oil addiction hasn't been easy. We had to leave our first bus company to find one that would allow us to put B20 in the tanks! At the time, there were only one or two such companies in existence.

Finding biodiesel pumps on tour has been hard – with just 1,100 around the country, Reverb has to coordinate local suppliers to deliver fuel to bands on the road. But since we've started, we've seen biodiesel skeptics quickly convert to advocates—drivers found that engines ran cleaner and cooler, and bus and truck companies have been responding to the increased demand from artists.

While our nation has made great strides in biodiesel production, there are a number of ways we could continue to improve. The energy bills that the House and Senate passed this summer are a great start. Increasing production from renewable sources like sugar, wood and algae while beefing up infrastructure – allowing consumers better access to biofuels at the pump--is a key component. I encourage you to keep this energy bill green, allowing Congress to take its first real step in the fight against Global Warming.

Corporations can do more as well. I'd like to see auto companies encourage the use of biodiesel in higher blends all the way up to pure B100 rather than holding the line at a 5% blend.

I'd also hope that the agricultural community could come together. Guster was thrilled to play with Willie Nelson at Farm Aid, where we heard firsthand from small family farmers who want to be part of the solution. There I had the pleasure of meeting the founders of the **Sustainable Biodiesel Alliance**. The SBA is a non-profit group whose mission is to promote sustainable biodiesel practices--from harvesting, to production, to distribution--keeping both environmental and social considerations to heart.

It would be awfully ironic to go from reliance on irresponsible oil companies to a biofuels industry dominated by large-scale commercial farming at the expense of small farmers, community economics and the environment.

If done right, biodiesel offers the unique opportunity for a fuel product that is not just “less bad” than petroleum diesel, but is an actively good fuel that can reinvigorate our local economies and actually replenish and revive the environmental damage we’ve caused.

On my path I’ve encountered so many inspiring, motivated, and truly selfless individuals who are determined to create and propagate positive change. From pioneer artists like Neil Young and Bonnie Raitt who have been circling the country using biodiesel for several years now to the City of Milwaukee’s Venu Gupta who powers his entire municipal fleet with millions of gallons of biodiesel made right in Mr. Sensenbrenner’s home state of Wisconsin.

Most inspiring are the countless conversations held with the millions of music fans at the Reverb Eco-Village. I invite you all to the next Reverb show, so you can take part in this dialog. Where talk of global warming doesn’t center around doom and gloom, but rather optimism, commitment and creative solutions. It’s a generation that stands ready to stare down the greatest challenge they will have to face. But they also look to you, on your stage, to lead the way.

I see this moment in time—a relative **flicker** when considering the Earth’s age—as a **critical** one. The growing wave of momentum to defeat Global Warming during this small window of opportunity could very well determine what life will look like on the other side of that flicker.

Thank you.

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