



THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL WARMING

Opening Statement for Edward J. Markey (D-MA)
"The Gas is Greener: The Future of Biofuels"
Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming
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With oil prices, oil imports and global warming pollution rising, we urgently need alternatives to oil that enhance our economy, our security and our environment. Biofuels offer an alternative to oil that could allow us to use grass to make a greener gas.

Although the United States has supported biofuels since the oil embargoes of the late 1970s and is now the largest producer in the world, biofuels still account for only three percent of total U.S. fuel consumption. In contrast, the potential of biofuels is great. The Department of Energy predicts that biofuels could displace 30 percent of current fuel consumption by 2030. To get from today's 3 percent to tomorrow's 30 percent is going to require smart policies that focus innovation, investment and infrastructure towards the next generation of biofuels.

Realizing the potential of biofuels to significantly reduce our oil dependence and global warming pollution will require unlocking the energy in the parts of plants currently considered too tough to use. Developing technologies to produce this so-called "cellulosic" ethanol and other advanced biofuels will open up an array of sources from which to produce alternatives to oil. Everything from agricultural and municipal waste to native prairie grasses could power our vehicles in the next few decades. In the future, the corner gas station might advertise that they can put a tulip in your tank, rather than a tiger.

By expanding the fuel possibilities, the next generation of biofuels will also expand the opportunity for all regions of the country to produce the fuels that meet their needs the best. Massachusetts once played a critical role in the U.S. energy supply... back when Melville was writing by whale oil lamps about Captain Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick. With the deployment of technology now being developed in the state, Massachusetts could once again begin to meet its own fuel needs and help other parts of the country do the same.

Despite the promise of biofuels, we can't let them become our white whale of energy policy. We can't relentlessly pursue them and lose sight of the larger goal to develop fuels that combat global warming, preserve clean air and water, and protect wildlife and human health. The 18th century whalers almost hunted their fuel source out of existence. We must learn from them as we literally grow the fuel of the 21st century. We have a chance to help develop a whole new industry that is good for people, their pocketbooks, and the planet.

As we reconcile the Senate and House energy bills this fall, we have the opportunity to steer the United States in a new energy direction. The Senate language would expand America's commitment to renewable fuels from the 4.7 billion gallons required today to 36 billion gallons by 2022, more than half from new cellulosic and other advanced biofuels. This would save almost 1.6 million barrels of gasoline-equivalent per day. Combining this with an increase in fuel economy and the rest of the best of the House and Senate legislation, Congress could send an energy bill to the President that has the potential by 2030 to,

- save more than twice the amount of oil we currently import from the Persian Gulf
- reduce U.S. global warming pollution by up to 40 percent of what we must do to save the planet, and
- create over 1.5 million jobs.

Our witnesses today represent a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the biofuels industry from innovators to producers to consumers. I look forward to their testimony and hearing from them how Congress can help guide the development of a fuel source that reduces our oil imports and the dangers of global warming.