

OPENING STATEMENT

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Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Renewable Fuel Standard: A Ten Year Review of Costs and Benefits
Joint Subcommittee Hearing
November 3, 2015

Good morning and thank you Mr. Chairman for calling this hearing today. I would also like to thank our witnesses for testifying.

The issue we are discussing this morning is not cut and dry. As you have already heard, some are willing to throw away the Renewable Fuel Standard and forget the progress we have made. Just this past Friday in Iowa, DuPont opened the largest cellulosic ethanol plant in the world. This advanced biofuel is significantly cleaner than first generation biofuels, and of course far cleaner than petroleum.

The plant is projected to produce over 30 million gallons of fuel-grade ethanol every year. This progress would not be possible without the substantial investments and innovations we have made in first-generation biofuels – progress that was largely driven by the RFS. While I agree there are challenges associated with the production of corn ethanol that merit continued scrutiny, it has created a bridge to a cleaner future for our transportation fuels.

That said, the progress of advanced biofuels has not matched the expectations that were set in the 2007 law. However, with commercial scale production now picking up, as examples like the new DuPont plant in Iowa are demonstrating, it appears that many of the technical challenges have been addressed.

Now we must focus our attention on integrating these cleaner fuels into the market. This is precisely the role of the RFS.

The law itself has not come without challenges. I look forward to eventually hearing from the Environmental Protection Agency on how they will ensure a more consistent release of

volumetric standards for the RFS. If we expect the biofuels industry to grow and provide a larger portion of our domestic transportation fuel, we must give them the confidence that the market will welcome their product.

More broadly speaking, while I understand that there is not yet a scientific consensus on his findings with regard to the RFS, I am happy to see that the Majority invited a witness today who is focused on addressing the urgent challenge of climate change. We should all be on the same team when it comes to the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. I hope Dr. DeCicco can not only provide insight on the RFS, but also convince my colleagues to spend more time and energy on addressing what may well be the biggest long-term problem facing the world.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and I yield back.