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GrowthEnergy.org

June 17, 2010

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing on behalf of Growth Energy, which represents 58 ethanol plant members, 38 associated industry members and more than 18,000 individuals to express our disappointment that the federal agencies involved in making a decision on Growth Energy's Green Jobs Waiver have delayed action yet again on allowing an increase in the amount of ethanol that can be blended with gasoline. As you have said yourself, Mr. President, accelerating the production of domestic ethanol would create U.S. jobs, help clean our environment, and strengthen our national security. Every day we delay the decision on the Green Jobs Waiver for E15 is another day we continue our addiction to foreign oil.

Mr. President, in March of 2009 Growth Energy filed a waiver with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to raise the amount of ethanol that can be blended with gasoline from 10 percent to 15 percent. Accompanying our waiver was a significant body of data which we believe demonstrates that raising the blend to 15 percent ethanol meets all the requirements of the Clean Air Act.

The waiver process requires a decision on a waiver within 270 days. However, instead of making a decision, EPA informed us on Dec. 1, 2009 that they were delaying the decision until the U.S. Department of Energy completed their own studies on the impact of moving from E10 to E15. EPA made a promise in writing that the decision would be made by the middle of this year. We are hearing that the decision on the waiver will again be delayed because the DOE tests would not be completed until this fall.

As you would expect, we find this further delay unacceptable. The fact that the federal agencies involved here cannot meet their own deadlines – on a decision that means so much to our nation – reinforces a public perception that government bureaucracy does not work in the best interests of the public. Approval of our waiver would create more than 136,000 new jobs in the U.S., reduce our dependence on foreign oil by 7 billion gallons, reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing 10.5 million cars from the road, and revitalize our rural communities.

We urge you to direct the federal agencies involved in this waiver to expedite the testing process, add extra staff, additional shifts, or whatever other steps necessary to accelerate the completion of the testing. Again, the waiver decision should have been made in December 2009; when that deadline was not met,

we were promised a decision in mid June of this year. Now we are again being told to wait for testing that we believe was unnecessary in the first place to make a decision.

Again, we recognize your leadership and support for renewable fuels and for your efforts to reduce our nation's addiction to foreign oil. We want to help. The U.S. ethanol industry currently provides almost 10 percent of our nation's blended gasoline use, but we can do much more if the barriers that have been erected by the federal government are removed.

We certainly understand that there many vested interests that do not share our belief that we should reduce our dependence on foreign oil. One well-worn tactic for delaying action in Washington, D.C., is to continually study or demand further testing. But as the data submitted with our waiver shows, the science already proves the benefits of ethanol as a transportation fuel; the demands for testing beyond the requirements of the Clean Air Act will do nothing to meet our nation's objective of energy independence, and in fact will also delay the development of cellulosic ethanol. We also stand with you in pursuing energy legislation in Congress to create a national energy policy that creates jobs in the United States, improves our environment and strengthens our national security by reducing our reliance on foreign oil. As you have said yourself, "Inaction is unacceptable."

We believe that can be accomplished with legislation requiring automakers to produce flex fuel vehicles and retailers to install blender pumps nationwide so that we create an open market that will allow consumers to choose their fuel at the pump – whether that be domestic ethanol or gas refined from foreign oil. We ask you for your support of that legislation to expand the infrastructure for delivering domestic ethanol to consumers through the installation of 200,000 blender pumps and the mandate that all automobiles sold in America be flex fuel vehicles.

With fossil fuels getting dirtier, costlier and riskier to extract, as we are witnessing with the epic catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico, now is the time we should move on expanding the production and consumption of clean, renewable fuels like ethanol. As you have said yourself, if Brazil can become energy independent with the use of domestic renewable fuels such as ethanol, so can the United States. The obstacles that we face are our own federal regulations limiting the amount of ethanol that can be blended, and the lack of a coherent national energy policy that would remove the infrastructure and market barriers that prevent consumers from having a choice of fuels. We urge you to move quickly and end any further delay on E15, as well as support our effort to open the transportation fuels market – with FFVs and blender pumps – to give consumers more choice at the pump.

Mr. President, we look forward to working with you as we take immediate action to move this country forward on developing clean, renewable fuels.

Sincerely,



Tom Buis
CEO, Growth Energy

cc: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack
Energy Secretary Stephen Chu
EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson