

**Oral Testimony of Emily Skor, Growth Energy CEO, before the U.S. House Committee on
Agriculture Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit
“A Look at the Renewable Economy in Rural America”
November 16, 2021**

Chairman Delgado, Ranking Member Fischbach, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the role of renewable energy in the rural economy. I'm Emily Skor, CEO of Growth Energy, the nation's largest ethanol trade association, representing producer plants and their innovative business partners.

Ethanol production has long been an economic driver for our rural economies. The United States is home to 210 biorefineries across 27 states that have the capacity to produce more than 17 billion gallons of low-carbon, renewable fuel.

Our industry is the second-largest customer for U.S. corn growers; and will purchase nearly 30 billion dollars' worth of corn this year to produce ethanol and an expanded array of bio-based products, such as high-protein animal feed, renewable chemicals, and corn oil. Renewable fuels like ethanol remain the single most affordable and abundant source of low-carbon motor fuel on the planet – and are critical to meeting carbon reduction goals today.

Recent research shows there is no path to net-zero emissions by 2050 without biofuels. Even accounting for the projected growth of electric vehicles, the Energy Information Administration indicates that the vast majority of cars on the road through 2050 will run on liquid fuels. Higher blends of low-carbon ethanol can be used in our current auto fleet to accelerate our transition to a 100% renewable energy future.

Put simply, America cannot decarbonize the transportation sector without homegrown biofuels.

To meet the rising demands for renewable energy, we must first have a strong and thriving rural economy and biofuels industry. At a minimum, that means the Biden Administration and Congress must ensure that biofuels are part of our transportation mix now and into the future.

This can be achieved through:

- A strong Renewable Fuel Standard,
- Accelerated nationwide use of higher blends like E15,
- Accurate carbon modeling of ethanol to better reflect the most current data, sustainable farming innovations, and carbon intensity reductions at our biorefineries, and
- Incentives that provide producers with strong policy signals to further reduce our carbon intensity and expand to new transportation markets.

A strong RFS will reduce carbon emissions and provide a steady market for U.S. grain. The annual blending requirements are woefully delayed, and in recent weeks, unsettling media reports indicate that EPA may turn its back on greater biofuel blending.

It is critical for ethanol producers and suppliers that EPA immediately propose 15 billion gallons of conventional biofuels for 2021 and 2022. The Biden Administration simply cannot meet its

climate goals while rolling back low-carbon biofuel blending requirements. We ask that the committee help deliver this message to the Administration.

We appreciate the committee including one billion dollars in the Build Back Better Act to provide drivers access to more low-carbon, higher ethanol blends. This provision builds upon USDA's successful biofuels infrastructure programs under the last two administrations.

These investments complement a nationwide move to a 15 percent ethanol blend, which would meaningfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions - the equivalent of removing nearly 4 million vehicles from the road each year.

It would also:

- create more than 182,000 additional jobs, and
- save consumers 12.2 billion dollars in fuel costs annually.

To help realize these benefits, Congress must pass the Year-Round Fuel Choice Act from Representative Angie Craig to restore E15 summer sales.

Through continued innovation, America's ethanol producers and farmers are using fewer inputs and improving efficiencies – at the plant and on the farm. We are pleased to see voluntary incentives in The Build Back Better Act that would help further reduce the carbon intensity of agriculture, which accounts for 50-65 percent of our lifecycle emissions. As biofuel producers capture the value of low-carbon farming practices, farmers would also have the opportunity to benefit in the form of premium prices for their commodities.

The legislation also contains several important incentives to help ethanol producers further reduce the carbon intensity of their fuel and explore new markets. These provisions, along with some recommended changes, are detailed in my written testimony.

To close, with the right policy environment, our industry can continue to decarbonize our transportation sector – from passenger vehicles to our aviation fleet.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your questions.

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