

Growth Energy CEO Emily Skor – Keynote Address to Iowa Renewable Fuels Summit, January 11, 2024

<EMBARGOED UNTIL 9:30AM CT OR UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF EMILY'S SPEECH>

INTRO

Good morning.

It is wonderful to be here at the 2024 **Iowa Renewable Fuels Association Summit**.

I want to congratulate the Iowa RFA board, staff, and members. You've assembled a **fantastic line-up** of speakers and panelists and have **terrific turn-out**, and I'm proud to be a part of your event.

It's hard to believe, but the last time I spoke to you from this podium, in person, was 2018.

Think back from then to now, the **growth and evolution** in our industry has been **transformative**.

Secretary Vilsack calls it a **biofuel renaissance**. And he's right.

And our organization, Growth Energy, has had **our own renaissance** alongside our members. We now represent **96** biorefineries across the country.

Our members purchase **20 percent** of U.S. corn and represent **60 percent** of all U.S. bioethanol production capacity.

In Iowa alone, our 26 member plants now represent more than **three billion gallons** of capacity, providing a market for more than a billion bushels of local corn.

Last year, we welcomed **Cargill**, the largest privately held company in America – with Iowa plants in **Eddyville** and **Fort Dodge**.

Our growing membership continues to lead the charge toward **net-zero carbon ...**

through investments at the **plant** and collaborations with **growers** to optimize **climate-smart** farm practices...

all things that will benefit our **nation's agriculture** for decades to come:

We have raced to the front lines of carbon capture technology.

- We are redirecting emissions into all kinds of useful applications, from treating municipal water to storing vaccines.

What was "just a co-product" is now the most important **nutrient-rich animal feed** in the world.

And moving forward, our members are well positioned to supply the feedstock for **Sustainable Aviation Fuel** – a potential 25-billion-gallon U.S. market in the decades to come.

[pause]

The bioeconomy is our **entire mission** at Growth Energy.

Cultivating it. Expanding it. Accelerating its growth by breaking down barriers and securing policies that recognize our innovations and advancements.

We are making sure our members get the attention and the credit they deserve... for investing in **science** and **talent...** for producing an **endless variety** of renewable, plant-based **fuels and products**.

RFS

On that front, the **Renewable Fuel Standard** remains one of our most important tools for driving demand.

As you know, we gained new ground in 2023. We secured three years of certainty under the RFS.

Three years is a big step. In the past, we've had one ... or none at all.

Protecting the RFS has always required vigilance.....this year will be no different.

Again, the RFS is on trial.

Again, our **environmental bona fides** are under fire.

Opponents are challenging us with all kinds of litigation — from **endangered species** to **refinery exemptions** to **blending obligations**.

Fortunately, after **years** of our **hard work**, the EPA has largely taken our side.

But those decisions need to stand up in court. The RFS will need a **clear and accurate defense**.

And we are there, alongside the agency — marshalling **facts**, presenting **research**, and deploying **legal arguments** — until this fight is won.

Alongside allies like **Iowa RFA**, we will ensure that America's **most successful clean energy policy** keeps delivering the market access we need to **expand the bioeconomy**.

[pause]

A strong RFS helps accelerate toward the **new norm** of E15 fueling (virtually) every car, every day, nationwide.

Thanks to champions in this room, we can point to Iowa's E15 standard as a **national model**.

Nebraska has already followed suit, and we're exploring similar strategies across the Midwest.

Five states have also updated **incentives for E15**.

Last summer, E15 saved drivers an average of 15 cents per gallon compared to standard E10 fuel choices.

In some states, drivers saw savings reach 40 to 60 cents per gallon.

As you well know, **continuing this momentum** depends on **federal decisions** to let consumers access E15 year-round.

Midwestern states – led by your own **Governor Reynolds** and **Attorney General Bird** – have stepped up to show real leadership on this issue.

Over nearly **two years**, they have demanded EPA act on a rule that would allow year-round E15 in eight states, including Iowa.

That rule is now in final review. Unfortunately – because of delay tactics by **refiners and EPA** – it's unlikely to take effect in time for this summer's driving season.

We need to see much faster progress on a rule that will be effective this year.

At the same time, we don't want E15 to be a regional, niche fuel.

So, we continue our work with lawmakers to adopt a **permanent, legislative solution** that will apply nationwide.

We cannot build the long-term future that Americans deserve one state or one temporary waiver at a time.

Fortunately, the public is increasingly on our side. More and more drivers want higher biofuel blends. And that's no accident.

You may have seen that, last year, Growth Energy debuted the **Green American Road Trip as part of our Get Biofuel campaign**.

We partnered with **Shawn Johnson East**, the gold medal Olympian and bestselling author.

Shawn and her family drove across the Midwest. They stopped right here in Des Moines and met with Iowa Corn.

During the trip, the East family showed drivers how they can **lower carbon emissions – and save money – with Unleaded 88**.

This **direct consumer engagement** worked.

Every E15 retailer that participated in the Get Biofuel program in 2023 **sold more E15** than those who didn't.

And we continue to work with fuel retailers to **expand higher blends**.

Supporting their marketing.

Navigating regulatory barriers.

We support them as they win infrastructure grants from the USDA – and we're proud that our team wrote half of all grants submitted last year.

With our help, these retailers are sparking *their own* **E15 renaissance**.

In 2023, nearly **half of the new E15 stores** chose to sell E15 as their **base-grade fuel** rather than as an added offering. All told, nearly 300 locations have now replaced 87/E10 with E15 as their mainstream fuel.

This move delivers, on average, **six times more E15 sales** per store.

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT

Of course, leading the bioeconomy also involves *other* critical priorities.

That starts with **new tax credits** that can **increase the value of every gallon of bioethanol** produced on American soil.

As you know, we scored some **huge wins** in the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act.

The package phases in new incentives designed to **spur investment** in SAF, carbon capture, and other clean fuels where **biofuel producers are leading the way**.

The law also allocates \$500 million to help our retail partners expand options at the pump.

But our ultimate ability to access these incentives **still remains uncertain**.

SAF / MODELING + TAILPIPE

We need the Treasury Department to **implement tax credits** in ways that allow bioethanol producers to **accelerate our climate progress while expanding economic opportunity** across rural America.

We cannot let the tax code put **agriculture on the sidelines**.

The carbon modeling needs to follow the **best available science**.

That means the GREET model from **Argonne National Lab**.

It's the global standard for modeling **agriculture-based energy**.

Just last month, Treasury issued new guidance recognizing the merits of using the GREET model for the SAF tax credit.

This is an important first step. However, the **work is not done**.

Because tax credit eligibility will be based on an updated GREET model, a "**40B GREET**." It likely won't be the GREET we know.

Environmental groups continue to urge Treasury to make **inaccurate and outdated assumptions** about land use change.

They are vocal. They're persistent. But they're also wrong.

They seek to block the **only viable source** of clean, renewable energy that is available at **sufficient scale** to **decarbonize the skies**.

So we continue to call on the administration for a clear path forward that allows us to **help them advance their goals**.

And that will only happen with help from Democratic champions who have the ear of the White House.

They helped us get to this point. And we will continue, together, our full court press.

From day one, the **entire supply chain** has advocated on this issue with **great unity** – from producers to growers to major airlines.

It's a **unified front** to make certain that this administration embraces sound science.

We're making a similar case on the administration's proposed tailpipe standards – which reflect a **dogmatic fixation on EVs**.

It presents a **false choice** between only two paths forward – fossil-fuel-only vehicles or mass adoption of EVs.

Neither of those hypotheticals reflect reality.

EPA's framework **blatantly ignores** the **proven, available, and American-made** solution of biofuels.

It picks one technology over all others, disregarding the **carbon-savings potential within liquid fuels** – which we know will **power the majority of cars on the road** for decades to come.

If you are reading the headlines you're seeing that with every passing month, there's more evidence that EVs alone will not get us to a net-zero future.

Biofuels must be part of the solution.

GOP ENGAGEMENT

Of course, our engagement on the Republican side is no less critical.

Not a single GOP lawmaker voted for the IRA.

But their support will be important for protecting – and even **extending** – new tax credits for the long term.

We saw this last April, when our champions here in Iowa led a **small but powerful contingent** of **eight lawmakers** who stood strong against their own party.

They forced House leaders to preserve rural America's share of the IRA during budget negotiations.

Now, we need to **grow that coalition** by communicating more effectively with Republicans around our issues.

According to our data, if implemented properly, the 45Z tax credit alone would:

- add **\$21.2 billion** to the U.S. economy,

- generate nearly **\$13.4 billion** in household income,
- support more than **192,000 jobs** across all economic sectors, and
- provide farmers with a **10 percent premium** price on low-carbon corn used at an ethanol plant.

The facts are strong...

for rural communities,
for energy security,
for consumers,
for the future of liquid fuels.

The story is **compelling**. But it's up to us to **share it**.

Lawmakers **across the spectrum** — including Republicans — want to connect with the **growing share of voters** who care about clean energy.

As long as the emphasis is on **affordability... reliability... and made in America**.

And that's where biofuels can shine.

CARBON PIPELINES

We face a similar challenge when it comes to carbon capture.

From vehicle fuels to SAF to other bioproducts, so much of our growth opportunity depends on our ability to access **new infrastructure** for transporting and sequestering CO2.

Growth Energy was proud to have Summit, Navigator, and Wolf join our ranks.

We shared in the **disappointment** when highly valuable projects fell victim to **misinformation** and **unfortunate politics**.

But these efforts remain vital to **rural America**.

Ultimately, we cannot build those pipelines without local support.

- **Farmers** who have been pillars of the community for generations...
- **Municipal and state officials** across the political spectrum...

They're the key players who can *drive* local support. It's up to us to bring them up to speed.

It's our job to help our neighbors connect those dots and see how our communities will benefit very directly from carbon transportation and storage.

TRADE

Now, as you know, our advocacy efforts don't stop at our own borders.

Better recognition of our industry's contributions will have a significant impact on our market opportunities internationally.

Our priorities for global and domestic engagement are quite consistent.

- We have to get modeling right.
- We have to expand access to new markets.
- We have to make sure regulators enforce laws already on the books.

That's why we're pressing our own leaders so hard to set an example by making GREET the **centerpiece of every clean energy strategy** – on land, sea, and air.

CAMPAIGN SEASON

Thankfully, there's no better time to educate policymakers than a presidential election year.

Granted, this is a campaign season like no other –

- Democrats are reshuffling their primaries,
- The GOP frontrunner is skipping debates, and
- Iowa is seeing fewer opportunities for the kind of **retail politics** that voters expect.

But we're not letting any of that get in our way.

We're working to cultivate allies and maximize the number of office holders who make **firm commitments** to bioethanol.

The proof is **right here on this stage**, where major candidates—**Governor Hutchinson, Ambassador Haley, Governor DeSantis**—are presenting detailed, nuanced agendas for expanding the bioeconomy.

And I'm confident they will continue supporting the bioeconomy regardless of whether they capture their party's nomination.

To that end, I am especially grateful for those of you who have opened your doors to candidates as they **barnstormed Iowa**.

You showed them the **full potential** of the bioeconomy.

And Iowa is just the tip of the spear. Growth Energy members will continue the push in other states over the next 10 months.

Through that engagement, we'll continue to remind our elected leaders how this industry is **expanding America's bioeconomy**.

How we're inspiring new ways to create more with less:

- More yield with less waste.
- More energy with less pollution.

- More prosperity with less dependence.

CONCLUSION

So thank you, as always, for making Iowa a **shining example** of what this industry can achieve.

The future is here. It's happening right now.

And that's why it's critical that we:

- Maintain **bipartisan support** for expanding the markets,
- Reinforce the importance of **sound science** and **accurate modeling** guidelines, and
- Drive our **own narrative** and show that we are the solution to a low-carbon future.

If we want to succeed, we have to get these right.

And no one knows that better than our **neighbors and allies** here in Iowa.

We are **proud to stand alongside** each and every one of you —

and help **lead the charge** across the country and the world.

Thank you.

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