

**Remarks for the 2024 Fuel Ethanol Workshop and Expo  
As Prepared for Delivery by Chris Bliley  
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1301 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55404**

Thank you, John. Let me add my congratulations to Jean, Mike, David and Mark. Well-deserved recognition for your contributions to our industry.

This is my 10<sup>th</sup> year attending the Fuel Ethanol Workshop.

I've stood before this distinguished group on the policy panel, and during technical panels in the afternoon.

But it's a privilege to kick things off.

And I want to thank the Bryan family, and the whole team at BBI International, for the chance to address you all this morning.

###

John alluded to this in his kind introduction: My involvement in this industry stretches back over 20 years.

Of course, I'm dating myself a bit.

But I started working on bioethanol policy as a Congressional staffer in the early 2000s.

And I joined EPA back in 2007, when the agency was writing the initial rules for the Renewable Fuel Standard.

This was when Taylor Swift was on her first tour—and she wasn't even the headliner!

*(Yes, with two teenaged daughters at home, we're Swifties in the Bliley house...)*

2007 was also the year Apple introduced the iPhone.

And at the time, we were still getting used to the fact that Pluto was no longer a planet.

Back then, this industry had the capacity to produce nearly four and a half billion gallons of bioethanol in a year.

Flash forward to this year. 2024.

Taylor Swift is in the middle of the first billion-dollar tour in music history.

We're on the iPhone 15—and the big tech buzz is all about AI.

As far as I know, Pluto is still not a planet.

And since my days at EPA, our annual bioethanol production capacity has almost quadrupled, to over 17 billion gallons.

A lot can change within two decades—a lot HAS changed.

But these changes don't just happen out of nowhere.

They're the result of countless consistent, targeted actions... all building up over time.

I've been lucky enough to have a front row seat for many of these changes in the bioethanol industry.

For the past 13 years, I've led regulatory affairs for Growth Energy.

I travel around the country, and all around the world... And I meet with folks who shape the policies that have direct bearing on our industry.

In every meeting, I make the case that policies that make sense for bioethanol, make sense for everyone.

I can tell you: *they are **listening***.

Think about our policy wins in the last year alone.

Last summer, we got the highest-ever blending obligations in the RFS Set.

We've been able to secure year-round access for E15 both last summer and yet again for this summer. *Six straight years of summer access to E15.*

In February, EPA **finally** heeded the call from Governors in the Midwest to allow *permanent, year-round* sales in eight states.

And at the end of April, we learned that for the first time ever, a government program will use an updated version of Argonne National Lab's GREET model.

Our efforts led the Treasury Department to use a lower land-use change value for the 40B Sustainable Aviation Fuel model... *and* recognize carbon reductions... both at the plant and on the farm.

This is not insignificant. It is a *critical* milestone in making bioethanol competitive in the market for sustainable aviation fuel.

And I'll note we notched these achievements with a great deal of help. From Secretary Vilsack at USDA... And from a committed, bipartisan group of congressional champions, who have consistently had our back.

Now: these aren't all *total* victories.

It's great to see progress on E15 emergency waivers and the so-called eight state opt-out. But we know, ultimately, we need a permanent, national solution.

We also know Washington didn't get it entirely right on 40B, and has far more work to do for 45Z.

For those using climate smart agriculture to reduce carbon intensity, unfortunately, the guidance requires use of *all three* specific ag practices *together*.

But the reality is, many farmers only use one or two.

And requiring farmers to bundle **all** of those practices is self-defeating. Because that rarely makes sense.

Instead of giving farmers the flexibility to adopt practices that *actually match their experience on the ground*... This all-or-nothing approach will leave important carbon reductions on the table.

But this is all just the beginning of a longer process—where policymakers recognize bioethanol’s critical importance to America’s *economic opportunity*.

To our *energy security*.

And to the country’s *global competitiveness*... in new and longstanding markets.

I’m an optimistic guy by nature.

But if you look around at the industry today, there are *objectively* good reasons to be bullish about our future.

###

It starts with this: carbon is the new currency.

We’re in a world where carbon reductions and business growth are intertwined... a world where markets are gaining value from the reduction of carbon pollution.

Shifts in policies, regulations, and markets are changing how people will get around... and what consumers will demand in the years ahead.

This is playing out at the state level, in places like California, Oregon, New Mexico...

At the federal level, in D.C....

And at the international level, in Ottawa, and other key export markets around the world.

And as a result, *virtually every industry on the planet* is facing this imperative to lower their carbon intensity.

But the good news is that bioethanol is *already* a low-carbon fuel—**period!**

We spend so much time defending our industry's environmental bonafides that I think it's easy to lose sight of that simple fact.

So I'll reiterate: *bioethanol is a low-carbon fuel*. Regardless of what some environmental groups and others say.

And we are *made* for this moment.

###

If carbon is the new currency, there is a *huge* opportunity ahead for our core business in the liquid fuels market.

I know folks are concerned about electric vehicles. Plenty has been written about the threat they pose to liquid fuels, and I've seen the articles saying our industry's days are numbered.

But to paraphrase Mark Twain, the reports of our death have been greatly exaggerated.

I can't be the only one who noticed EV sales dropping over the past year and a half... Or heard the news that some major automakers are shifting their plans to emphasize hybrid vehicles instead of solely electric ones.

For example, Toyota is leading the way in carbon reductions with their hybrid technology, in conjunction with low-carbon fuels.

Why? As the saying goes, you want to hunt where the ducks are.

The spotlight is on EVs, but consumers are still focused on vehicles that use liquid fuels.

This all underscores a truth that often gets overlooked:

Americans are going to use over **a trillion gallons** of liquid fuel over the next decade.

They're going to use **another trillion** in the decade after that. **And** the decade after that.

*It's just a fact.*

There are more than *250 million* internal combustion vehicles on American roads today.

And more will join them in the coming decades—even as the EV market grows.

Americans keep their cars for a long time. So when they buy one with an internal combustion engine, that vehicle will still be on the road eight... ten... or—if you're the Bliley family—14 years from now.

We can power those cars with bioethanol blends that are made here in America, supporting American jobs... All while cutting back on carbon.

Because bioethanol offers a roughly 50 percent reduction in carbon intensity over gasoline.

In fact, if the entire nation shifted to E15, the carbon impact would be the equivalent of taking nearly four million cars off the road—every single year.

And the higher the blend, the higher the reduction.

I don't want to forget E85—because it's having a renaissance, driven by increased use in California.

The Golden State may have one of the most complex regulatory environments for liquid fuels. They are the only state holding out on E15 approval.

But California's high gas prices are pushing people toward E85—which can retail for \$2 less per gallon than regular gasoline.

And I'll say this, with all of you as my witness: *we are going to get California on board with E15, too.*

Whether in California or beyond, policymakers at all levels are paying attention, and so are the automakers.

We have *all of you* to thank for that.

You've helped us advocate for expanded access to higher bioethanol blends.

And together, we've made it clear to policymakers and regulators that this should be a no-brainer.

Not just for the sake of carbon reduction... but for *affordability*.

For *energy security*.

For *economic development* in American communities.

Whether the focus is on climate, the consumer, or the country at large... *bioethanol can drive the cause **forward**.*

So we'll keep banging the drum for E15 and higher blends.

And at the same time, we're positioning all of you to win in other markets.

Because while on-road liquid fuels are our bread and butter, this industry goes well beyond those applications each and every day.

I may work in D.C., but I spend a lot of time meeting with you and other producers around the country.

When I talk with you... when I tour your plants... and when I look out at all of you today... One thing comes to mind.

*This is an industry full of **innovators**.*

Look at all the ways we are constantly getting more efficient.

I've talked to farmers who have cut their fuel use *in half* and continue to increase their yield.

American farmers are *constantly* proving critics **wrong** by growing more on less land.

I've also heard your stories about unlocking efficiencies at the plant.

You're getting more gallons of bioethanol out of every bushel of corn than ever before.

You've lowered costs.

You've boosted value.

And, more and more, you are capturing the attention of folks looking for effective ways to compete where carbon... is the new currency.

Consider this:

Between 2005 and 2019, the amount of bioethanol produced per bushel of corn increased by two percent each year.



In that same span, bioethanol's carbon intensity dropped *by 20 percent*.

Carbon reductions and business success—two sides of the same coin in today's economy.

And this industry is **winning** on *both* fronts.

Another thing I'm reminded of when I see the true innovators here in this audience is that you've unlocked new revenue streams.

When you see the Growth Energy logo and read our tagline—*Expanding America's Bioeconomy*—this is exactly what we're talking about.

Consider the food-grade carbon dioxide produced at our plants. It's one of the purest CO2 streams around.

Many of you no doubt already sell it for use in dry ice, refrigeration, beverage carbonation.

Maybe it was in some of the beers we cracked open at last night's reception!

Well, as the push to drive down carbon continues, we could see a day when the carbon dioxide from our plants is put to far broader use—producing more sustainable fertilizer... bioplastics... concrete... hydrogen... and maybe even other biofuels.

The industry is already making a *massive* investment in carbon capture technologies.

We have plants ready to deploy carbon capture onsite, just awaiting EPA permits.

Meanwhile, dozens of other plants are making arrangements to link up to pipelines that will safely carry and store CO2 from their facilities.

That's why one of our top priorities at Growth Energy is securing policies that will *help* these investments, rather than holding them back—from tax incentives, to streamlined permitting, to pipeline support.

And in the longer-term, our embrace of innovation and the broader bioeconomy can help us find *new* homes for bioethanol, in places like Sustainable Aviation Fuel.

We're at the beginning of a long-term process when it comes to decarbonizing aviation.

But here's something worth noting: SAF could be a 105-billion-dollar market.

That would *double* the size of our entire industry's contribution to U.S. GDP.

Now, I don't want to get too excited about the *potential*, when the *present* suggests there is a *LONG* way to go.

The market is in its infancy.

The U.S. used less than 25 million gallons of SAF last year.

But that could change pretty quickly.

The federal government has set an annual goal of producing 3 *billion* gallons a year—that's **billion**, with a "**B**"—by decade's end.

And then the goal is 35 *billion* gallons by 2050.

Getting there will be tough.

But the way I see it, our industry doesn't shrink from a challenge.

SAF is just the next big gap for us to fill.

And in fact, some of our members are already stepping up to do it.

Our industry's innovation has gotten us this far.

I'm optimistic it'll carry us into a future where, as President Biden said, farmers will provide 95 percent of all sustainable aviation fuel.

The focus on SAF is going to last far beyond any one administration.

Because, politics aside, airlines are calling for it.

We've seen SAF commitments from United, Delta, Virgin Atlantic, and others.

They know it's key to their long-term competitiveness.

So success for them means success for us.

Crop-based biofuels are the *only* feedstock available in large enough quantities to get this market off the ground.

The country *can't hit* those ambitious SAF targets without you.

And *I know* you're ready to answer the call.

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Any way you look at it, bioethanol is a powerful tool for cutting carbon while fostering long-term economic growth.

From the cars and trucks on our roads today... the planes in our skies... the ships on our oceans... the products people buy, and the factories that make 'em.

I can't say it enough: Bioethanol is a low-carbon fuel. And we've shown we can make it even *lower-carbon*.

But if we want to make the most of our industry's innovations... We need regulations that *recognize* those innovations.

Regulations that fully account for them, and supercharge their value to both the economy *and* the environment.

I'm proud to help lead Growth Energy's advocacy for pro-bioethanol policies.

And I'm proud of what we've accomplished—from E15 access and approvals, to the RFS... from 40B to what we hope to see in 45Z... In Washington and in state capitals nationwide.

Some of these wins have *literally* taken **decades** to deliver.

Some came at a time when activity in Congress, and in state legislatures, had otherwise ground to a halt.

And some involved efforts that spanned different administrations... and endured through transfers of power.

What that demonstrates... is that whether we're talking to members of Congress or folks in the White House... with political appointees or longtime agency employees... in D.C. or in the states... we know how to secure their support.

Our industry's greatest strength is our bipartisan appeal.

Because we're American-made ***and*** low-carbon.

Because we support job security for American workers ***and*** energy security for American consumers.

Because we can bring down the price at the pump ***and*** the environmental impact of our cars and trucks.

We have a big election coming in November.

But no matter the outcome, ***we*** are positioned for ***success***.

After all: We've toured plants in Iowa with members of the Trump administration... *and* we've walked the halls of the EPA with members of the Biden administration.

We've elevated the role of bioethanol under ***both*** of these presidents.

And we can transcend the political divide... no matter who gets a second term.

It may seem like the two parties are hopelessly against each other and paralyzed by partisan gridlock.

On most issues, this is true.

But one thing they seem to agree on is biofuels.

Shoring up our energy security and our national security... Ensuring affordable fuel prices for American families... Drawing investment into American communities and creating jobs for American workers...

These causes bring policymakers together from across the entire political spectrum.

*And bioethanol advances ***all of them***.*

That's the case we've been making relentlessly... A case *you're* making ***stronger and stronger***.

It's an argument that's helped us build deep, longstanding relationships, at every level.

And it's an argument that's winning people over.

**Conclusion: Making Our Own Future**

Take a look at the policies rolling out across the country, and it's clear as day.

What you and I have known for a long time is finally resonating with policymakers everywhere.

In a world where carbon is the new currency, bioethanol can be a difference-maker—and thanks to you, the potential is only rising.

Think back to 2007 again.

To the beginning of the modern bioethanol industry.

Think about how much has changed.

How far we've come.

Think about the markets we've entered that didn't exist 20 years ago.

And all the value streams we've unlocked along the way.

It's been a *great* two decades.

And I'm betting the next two will be *even more transformative*.

The future of homegrown bioethanol is bright... *because of you*.

Thank you...and have a great rest of the Fuel Ethanol Workshop.

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