



spreading the word about clean and renewable solutions from sugarcane



Two Important Letters May Help Make Ethanol Reform A Reality

By Joel Velasco

News last week that leading conservative Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Jim DeMint (R-SC) joined former Vice President Al Gore in calling for ethanol policy reform sent ripples through the renewable energy world, which is closely eyeing the lame-duck session to see if Congress will extend the costly ethanol subsidies and trade protection, or let them expire as scheduled on December 31st.

Today's release of a bipartisan Dear Colleague letter from Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Jon Kyl (R-AZ) brought even greater evidence that ending the ethanol tariff and subsidies is "something we can all agree on." The letter, signed by 17 Democrats and Republicans from across the country, calls for an end to policies that are "fiscally irresponsible and environmentally unwise," and says "The tariff on ethanol makes our country more dependent on foreign oil [...] Eliminating or reducing the ethanol tariff would diversify our fuel supply, replace oil imports from OPEC countries with ethanol from our allies, and expand our trade relationships with democratic states."

Here's the list of signatories:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) | 10. Bob Corker (R-TN) |
| 2. Jon Kyl (R-AZ) | 11. Michael Enzi (R-WY) |
| 3. Robert Bennett (R-UT) | 12. John McCain (R-AZ) |
| 4. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) | 13. Jack Reed (D-RI) |
| 5. Richard Burr (R-NC) | 14. Jeanne Shaheen (D-H) |
| 6. Benjamin Cardin (D-MD) | 15. Mark Warner (D-VA) |
| 7. Tom Coburn (R-OK) | 16. Jim Webb (D-VA) |
| 8. Chris Coons (D-DE) | 17. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) |
| 9. Susan Collins (R-ME) | |





spreading the word about clean and renewable solutions from sugarcane



Members of Congress aren't the only ones pushing for an end to the ethanol tariff and subsidies. Yesterday, an extremely broad and diverse coalition of nearly 60 groups sent a letter to Congressional leadership urging that they no longer "continue subsidizing gasoline refiners for something that they are already required to do by the Renewable Fuels Standard [...]" Among the signatories were business associations, hunger and development organizations, taxpayer advocates, agricultural groups, religious organizations, environmental groups, budget hawks and public interest organizations. The letter was home to many strange bedfellows that even included the liberal lightning rod MoveOn.org and tea party originators FreedomWorks – surely this must be a first!

Despite this overwhelming support from almost every nook and cranny, the corn ethanol industry is still pinning its hopes on a tax package that could move before the lame duck concludes. It's hard to imagine what more it could take to end this boondoggle once and for all. Congress has every reason and then some to make the right decision – from editorials in over 60 newspapers to over 80,000 letters from clean energy advocates across the country. When the clock runs out, Americans will hopefully enjoy the economic, environmental and energy security benefits of sugarcane ethanol at last.

Posted on November 30, 2010, on SweeterAlternative.com

Joel Velasco is UNICA's Chief Representative – North America.