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\*\*\*RFA TO OBAMA: U.S. ETHANOL INDUSTRY NOT BEHIND TECHNOLOGY CURVE

Two days after President Obama said that corn-based ethanol was "probably the least efficient" biofuel, the Renewable Fuels Association (RFA) has sent the president a letter, touting the economic and environmental efficiency gains the first generation ethanol industry has experienced.

"Given its rapid rate of innovation and evolution, it was concerning to hear you suggest during your Twitter town hall that American ethanol was behind the innovation curve. More troubling was your assessment that Brazilian ethanol is a superior, more efficient product than the one produced here at home," wrote RFA President Bob Dinneen.

"I'm a big supporter of biofuels," Obama explained during the live townhall discussion on Wednesday, responding to a question about phasing out ethanol subsidies. "But one of the things that's become clear is that we need to accelerate our basic research in ethanol and other biofuels that are made from things like woodchips and algae as opposed to just focusing on corn, which is probably the least efficient energy producer of these various other approaches," the president noted.

"And so I think that it's important for even those folks in farm states who traditionally have been strong supporters of ethanol to examine, 'Are we, in fact, going after the cutting-edge biodiesel and ethanol approaches that allow, for example, Brazil to run about a third of its transportation system on biofuels?'" Obama asked.

"I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with an up-to-date accounting of domestic ethanol production today," Dinneen explained in his three-page letter to the president.

"To start, America's ethanol industry is the largest in the world. We are producing well over 13 billion gallons of ethanol each and every year, and displacing more than 445 million barrels of oil annually--a sum greater than annual oil imports from Saudi Arabia. It is also important to note that American-made ethanol is the most cost-effective motor fuel on the market today, costing less than Brazilian ethanol and gasoline," Dinneen noted.

Regarding Obama's comment on efficiency, Dinneen noted that "ethanol production today is showing tremendous energy benefits with current ethanol production producing up to 2.3 units of energy for every unit of energy used. Together with improved efficiencies and new technologies, ethanol producers are getting more ethanol per bushel of corn and using fewer BTUs and gallons of water in the process," he added.

"America's ethanol industry is not behind the curve in technology innovation; we are setting the curve," Dinneen continued. "Investments made in ethanol production capacity, technology and fueling infrastructure are just now beginning to pay dividends. As such, now is not the time to question our progress or efficiency, but to reassert the importance of a robust, domestic ethanol industry to the nation's energy, environmental, economic and national security goals," he added.

"The contributions of homegrown first- and second-generation ethanol production to our energy future should not be marred by outdated and unbalanced comparisons to biofuels production in other nations," Dinneen wrote. "Mr. President, America's ethanol industry should be a source of pride. It is a sparkling example of what made America great: the imagination to dream and the ability to make that dream a reality," he added.

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