



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DOMESTIC BIOFUELS

Room 412 East
State Capitol

August 19, 2008
10:00 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

[The following is a summary of the August 19, 2008 meeting of the Special Committee on Domestic Biofuels. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Kreitlow called the meeting to order. The roll was called and it was determined that a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Senator Pat Kreitlow, Chair; Representative Scott Suder, Vice Chair; Representatives Donald Friske and Mike Sheridan; and Public Members Mary Blanchard, Howard Bohl, Steve Christensen, T. Randall Fortenbery, Jennifer Giegerich, Jeremy Goodfellow, Don Guay, Bill Johnson, Steve Loehr, John Salden, Peter Taglia, Peter Tomasi.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED: Senator Robert Jauch; and Public Member Steve Graham.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: John Stolzenberg, Chief of Research Services; Larry Konopacki, Staff Attorney; and Tracey Young, Support Staff.

APPEARANCES: Senator Fred A. Risser, Co-Chair, Joint Legislative Council; Terry C. Anderson, Director, Wisconsin Legislative Council; Gary Radloff, Director of Policy and Strategic Communications, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection; R. Brooke Coleman, Executive Director, New Fuels Alliance, Boston; Judy Ziewacz, Executive Director, Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence; and Timothy Donohue, Director, Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center, University of Wisconsin Madison.

Opening Remarks

Senator Risser, Co-Chair, Joint Legislative Council, welcomed the committee and gave a brief summary of the Joint Legislative Council. Terry C. Anderson, Director of the Wisconsin Legislative Council, discussed rules for voting, including that a committee member must be present to vote, described the process for reimbursement of expenses, and introduced the Legislative Council staff members assigned to work with the committee. He noted that audio recordings and minutes of the committee meetings and other committee materials, including handouts, slide presentations, and written remarks are available on the committee's Web site: (<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2008/BIO/index.htm>).

Introduction of Committee Members

Chair Kreitlow introduced himself and Vice-Chair Suder and welcomed the committee. He discussed his goals for the committee and asked the rest of the committee to briefly introduce themselves.

Distribution of Materials

The following materials were either distributed to committee members or referenced by Legislative Council staff and are available at the committee's Web site:

- *Wisconsin Biofuels and Alternative Fuels Use Report*, 2008 Annual Report, Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence.
- *2007 Wisconsin Energy Statistics; Full Report and Highlights*, Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence.
- *Wisconsin Guide for Building Biofuels Facilities*, Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence, April 2007.
- Final Report, *Wisconsin Consortium on Biobased Industry*, May 2006.
 - Opportunities and Advantages Study.
- *Securing a Clean Energy Future; Greener Fuels, Greener Vehicles: A State Resource Guide*, National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, undated.

Presentations by Invited Speakers

Gary Radloff, Director of Policy and Strategic Communications, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP)

Rod Nilsestuen, the Secretary of DATCP, could not attend the meeting due to illness so Gary Radloff, the DATCP Director of Policy and Strategic Communications, spoke to the committee about positioning Wisconsin to take advantage of opportunities related to biofuels and the bioeconomy. Mr.

Radloff talked about the advantages of biofuels, the federal standards underlying state biofuels policy, the need to link biofuels, biopower, and bioproducts in state policy, the challenges related to transporting biofuels like ethanol, and “advanced renewable” or “feed in” tariff policies. He introduced the committee to the work of the Midwest Governor’s Association and the North Central Bioeconomy Consortium on biofuels, and provided a handout on the latter. In response to questions, Mr. Radloff discussed issues including the rail transport system in this state, competitive challenges with our neighboring states, and our capacity to produce feedstocks for ethanol production.

R. Brooke Coleman, Executive Director, New Fuels Alliance, Boston, MA

Mr. Coleman introduced the New Fuels Alliance and the Northeast Biofuels Collaborative and provided a broad overview of biofuels issues. He spoke about the drawbacks of a petroleum-based energy system, the federal political power of oil and agriculture lobbies, the importance of current biofuel production for next-generation biofuels, and the “food versus fuel” debate. He also discussed environmental issues, increases in agricultural efficiency, and the drivers that impact corn prices. In response to questions, Mr. Coleman provided more detail about advancements in agricultural practices, the public relations challenges faced by biofuels promoters, environmental issues, land use controls, import tariffs, and the need for current-generation biofuels systems to lay the groundwork for the next generation of production systems.

Mr. Coleman’s provided the following handouts to the committee:

- *Food Prices Rise as Corporate Profits Soar*, published by FoodPriceTruth.org.
- *Food Fights and Rising Prices: Renewing Our Fuel Standards and Our National Security*, published by the Truman National Security Project (June 11, 2008).
- Transcript, *Briefing with Reporters on the Case for Food and Fuel*, prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (May 19, 2008).

Judy Ziewacz, Executive Director, Wisconsin Office of Energy Independence

Ms. Ziewacz introduced the committee to the Office of Energy Independence, and described its mission and its focus. She explained the work of Governor Doyle’s cabinet working group on biofuels and outlined some of the needs and challenges related to having systems in place in this state to be ready to commercially produce cellulosic biofuels when the technology is available and cost-effective. She also provided the committee with background statistics about current biofuels production, distribution, and use in this state, and explained the unique advantages the Midwest region has in being able to take advantage of the emerging bioeconomy.

Timothy Donohue, Director, Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center, University of Wisconsin Madison

Mr. Donohue provided the committee with basic information about biofuels, explained the potential for the biofuels industry, and introduced the committee to the Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center (GLBRC) at the UW-Madison. Mr. Donohue explained the role that the GLBRC will play in developing ways to produce next-generation biofuels from cellulosic materials cost-effectively, explained some of the scientific and technological hurdles that the GLBRC is currently working, and

discussed the lack of predictability surrounding the timing of what the GLBRC hopes to accomplish. In response to questions Mr. Donohue explained that the state should be ready to respond to opportunities to support the building of the biofuels industry in this state as they present themselves over time, and should take advantage of the research and development capability of the UW.

Mr. Donohue provided the following handouts to the committee:

- *U.S. Department of Energy's Bioenergy Research Centers, An Overview of the Science* (February 2008).
- *Biofuels & Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Myths versus Facts*, U.S. Department of Energy.
- Guest Column by Tim Donohue: *Building the Next Generation of Biofuels* (May 12, 2008).
- Overview of the Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center (GLBRC).
- Development of a Sustainable Bioenergy Economy (GLBRC).
- *Foley & Donohue: Support the next generation of biofuels* (July 17, 2008).

Discussion of Committee Assignment

Chair Kreitlow next provided public members Mary Blanchard, Don Guay, Randy Fortenbery, and Howard Bohl the opportunity to supplement the information provided by the day's speakers. Ms. Blanchard explained the work being done by Virent Energy Systems to develop transforming technology to convert complex sugars or mixed-sugar streams into advanced biofuels, gasoline, jet fuels, and diesel. Professor Guay provided an overview of efforts underway at UW-Stevens Point to find new ways to break wood down into its component sugars to facilitate transportation biofuel production, and discussed the potential of other products such as isoprene, butanol, and others. Randy Fortenbery and Howard Bohl talked about economic drivers effecting corn and other commodity prices. The committee then discussed its assignment and members noted issues that they believe are important considerations for the committee to make.

Other Business

There was no other business brought before the committee.

Plans for Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Special Committee will be ***Tuesday, September 16, 2008, at 10:00 a.m., in Room 412 East, State Capitol, Madison.*** The following meeting is tentatively scheduled for ***October 14, 2008***, with details to be provided at a later date.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

LAK:ty