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Ethanol: A bright (yellow) future for all Missourians

You have probably seen the commercials. People of all ages stand in front of their automobiles, cornfields, and gas pumps, asking you to “Live Green, Go Yellow” in General Motors commercials. In ads for Ford’s flex fuel vehicles, a farmer fills up his new F-150 FFV truck using a corn stalk in the middle of his corn field. Even Kermit the Frog has come out in support of vehicle energy-saving solutions, using the lyrics of his well-known song, “Its Not Easy Being Green.” Amid a national pop culture campaign for ethanol and flex fuel vehicles, it’s only natural that the Missouri Senate would look into cleaner living standards for Missouri drivers.

Giving Drivers a New Choice at the Pump

Cleaner living using green power is one of the Senate’s top priorities this year. Using corn to power our cars will give drivers a new choice at the pump that lowers fuel prices and makes our environment cleaner, all while decreasing our dependence on foreign oil.

This week the Missouri Senate approved House Bill 1270 to provide Missouri motorists with a cleaner burning, renewable fuel that lowers prices at the pump and supports Missouri’s farmers. The bill requires gasoline sold in Missouri to contain a 10 percent ethanol blend by 2008. By passing House Bill 1270 we are pursuing a path to energy independence.

There are many benefits to using ethanol to power our cars. Not only is it better for the environment, the corn grown to make ethanol comes straight from Missouri farmers, creating jobs here at home and ensuring we make the best use of our state’s vast agricultural resources. With Missouri farmers driving our economy instead of depending on the uncertainty of oil from the Middle East, we can move closer to independence in our fuel supply.

Using Corn to Power Our Cars

Ethanol is a cleaner burning, renewable product made from fermented agricultural products, such as corn. Ethanol contains oxygen, which provides a cleaner fuel that burns more efficiently. When used in vehicles, ethanol reduces carbon dioxide, a major contributor to pollution. It also produces 13 percent less greenhouse gases.

All motor vehicles manufactured since the 1970s can run on a 10 percent ethanol blend. Engines do not need to be modified, and many local gas pumps already provide this blend. To ensure HB 1270 does not cost taxpayers more at the pump, any time the price of ethanol is higher than the cost of gasoline, the 10 percent ethanol standard will be suspended.

Missouri's New Economic Engine

Missouri farmers produce more than 1 million bushels of corn every year. With three ethanol plants already running in Missouri, and with another one being built, Missouri should be able to produce enough ethanol to blend 10 percent of all gasoline sold in the state.

Americia's car industries are introducing more and more ethanol friendly vehicles. GM touts they have more than 1.5 million flex fuel cars on the road. Ford is selling the new F-150 FFV trucks you see advertised, and many of them are assembled right here in Missouri at a plant in Kansas City. Chrysler, who recently made a \$1 billion dollar commitment in two plants in St. Louis County, announced their plans to launch 250,000 flex fuel vehicles in 2007. The flex fuel option will be available on the company's Jeep Commander, Sebring convertible, Dodge Dakota, Ram, and Durango; as well as the Dodge caravan and Chrysler Town & Country minivans.

Overall, ethanol has the potential to make Missouri a national leader in green power as well as benefit our economy and environment.