



Gibbons Capitol Report
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Missouri is Going Green

Energy is the beating heart of our modern life, and if we expect the people of Missouri to have opportunities in the future, a clean, plentiful supply of energy is essential. We must pursue a path to energy abundance and independence.

Pursuing a Path to Energy Independence

Sen. Chris Koster, R-Harrisonville, introduced Senate Bill 915 to establish the Green Power Initiative and move Missouri toward a more environmentally sound energy policy. The bill was third read in the Senate this week and will move to the House for similar consideration. SB 915 will gradually increase Missouri's use of renewable energy sources by directing the state's regulated utilities to produce more electricity from renewable sources, such as solar, wind, water and bio-mass. Under the legislation, regulated utilities in Missouri are charged with getting 3 percent of their electrical energy from renewable sources by 2012, 7 percent by 2015, and 10 percent by 2020.

The Green Power Initiative marks considerable progress in protecting the environment and looking out for the best interests of Missouri consumers. With this legislation, we are encouraging utilities to invest wisely in renewable energy sources by setting a practical and cost-effective target. This will enable Missouri to be more environmentally conscious as a state and keep consumer rates at affordable levels.

Rewards for Green Living

It is important for Missourians to take steps to make their homes more energy efficient. Not only does the bill bring sustainability and responsibility to Missouri utilities, it also encourages homeowners to find ways to conserve. SB 915 creates the Residential Alternative Energy Tax Credit program, rewarding Missourians who install solar electric panels, energy-efficient appliances, heating and cooling systems or windows.

Using Corn to Power Our Cars

There are many benefits to using ethanol to power our cars. Not only is it unquestionably 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.

Gov. Matt Blunt has proposed creating a 10 percent ethanol standard for all gasoline sold in Missouri. A bill currently in the House lays out a timeframe to give Missourians this choice at the gas pump.

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 would soon be able to produce enough ethanol to blend 10 percent of all gasoline sold in the state. Experts say the more ethanol we use, the less gas we use. It also produces 13 percent less greenhouse gas. Ethanol has the potential to turn Missouri into an economic engine, and there is no more environmentally friendly way to begin our path to independence.

As we work on the foundation of our future, it is critical that we have an energy plan and begin taking action on it today. Our ability to solve our energy crisis is critical to our survival. I serve on the Governor's Energy Task Force and look forward to continuing our work to find more renewable energy solutions for our state. Encouraging utilities and homeowners to invest wisely in renewable energy sources coupled with ethanol production will put Missouri on the forefront of energy efficiency. These are the first steps on our path to energy independence and abundance.