

Cellulosic firms back higher ethanol blends

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The effort in the United States to encourage an increase in the ethanol blend rate from 10pc to 15pc has received new support, but also a diverse group of opposition.

Leaders of nine cellulosic ethanol companies last week released a letter for US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson in support of the Green Jobs waiver submitted by Growth Energy earlier this month. The waiver would boost the blend to 15pc.

In the letter, the group supports the idea that assurance of a "growing market for ethanol is essential to commercialising cost-competitive advanced biofuels".

Current ethanol producers have already hit the regulatory cap on the fuel and produce more than can be used under the current restrictions, they point out.

They note that cellulosic ethanol could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 86pc relative to gasoline, according to US Department of Energy reports.

In addition, they note that a recent study by Sandia National Laboratories and General Motors found that plant and forestry waste and dedicated energy crops could sustainably replace nearly a third of gasoline use by 2030.

According to a Dow Jones report, however, a diverse group of environmental and industry groups has been firing up in opposition.

Worries over rising commodity prices, which they claim is caused by ethanol demand, have wreaked havoc on food production.

In addition, the Alliance of Auto Manufacturers is worried that the higher blend could cause engine damage since today's auto power plants are so complicated.

Ethanol proponents, including the Renewable Fuels Association, say the science is already in and that the industry could move to the higher blend.

FarmProgress, USA

Source: <http://www.farmprogress.com>

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