



A Major Victory for Clean Energy & Market Competition

By Leticia Phillips

Yesterday's vote was a symbol of changing times. Politico announced "there are no longer any sacred cows when it come to energy," while the Wall Street Journal called it "an ethanol miracle."

By a margin of 73 to 27, the Senate approved an amendment offered by Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) to end the ethanol tax credit and import tariff created in 1980. A bipartisan vote backed by almost three-fourths of the Senate sends a strong signal supporting reform of U.S. ethanol policy and development of a global market for clean energy. An overwhelming majority of Senators also indicated the 30-year old corn ethanol industry is mature and ready to compete in an open market.

As Sen. Coburn said yesterday, "the best way for ethanol to survive is for it to stand on its own two feet, without subsidies, and us spending money that we don't have." Brazil ended government subsidies for ethanol more than a decade ago and eliminated its ethanol tariff early last year. That's why we've been arguing for over a year that it is time for the United States to do the same. As the world's top producers of ethanol, the U.S. and Brazil should lead by example in creating a free market for clean, renewable energy. And yesterday was an important step towards that goal.

Dissecting the Vote

Support for ending the tariff was significant and bipartisan. A large majority of Republicans (33 out of 47 senators) and Democrats (40 out of 53, including two Independents who caucus with the Democrats) supported the amendment and voted to end the ethanol tax credit and trade protection six months ahead of their scheduled expiration on December 31, 2011.

The opposition was mainly regional. Only 15 states are represented by a senator who voted "Nay" and, in fact, most of the opposition came from only 12 states where both senators voted against the measure. These included: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and South Dakota. You can view the final tally and see how your senator voted.

What's Next?

The Senate took an important step towards helping lower fuel prices and providing Americans with greater access to clean and affordable renewable fuels like sugarcane ethanol. But there are many more steps still remaining to see the amendment signed into law. We look forward to continuing our work with members of Congress and the Obama Administration to end this unfair tariff.

We thank Senators Feinstein and Coburn for their leadership on this important issue, and congratulate all 73 Senators for having taken such an important step. Please



spreading the word about clean and renewable solutions from sugarcane



take a moment to contact your senators and express your appreciation personally for their support. While you're crafting the e-mail, you may also want to look through the over 200 editorials from across the country that helped make the case for reform.

But keep in mind that the fight for access to clean, renewable energy is still not over. That's why we'll continue our campaign to save Americans money, cut dependence on Middle East oil and improve the environment by allowing other alternative fuels like sugarcane ethanol to compete fairly in the United States.

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