

Testimony of Grant R. Gulibon
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Good morning, Chairman Yaw, and members of the committee. My name is Grant Gulibon, and I serve as Regulatory Affairs Specialist with Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, the Commonwealth's largest general farm organization representing more than 27,000 member families across the state. Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments today on agriculture's role in securing the Commonwealth's energy future through its efforts to create beneficial "waste-to-fuel" projects in Pennsylvania.

Our members have a significant interest in the development of home-grown energy. Whether that is leasing land for wind turbines and/or natural gas wells or producing the feedstocks that are ultimately converted into biofuels, our farmers want to help our state and country move away from a reliance on foreign energy. Beyond biofuels, farms and ranches are embracing a variety of "clean energy" sources, harnessing natural resources and turning farm waste into fuel. Over the last decade, we have seen a 167% nationwide increase in farms using renewable energy-producing systems, which includes geothermal, solar panels, windmills, hydro systems and methane digesters. Use of these systems allows farmers to play a role in generating renewable energy on their land, in the crops they grow and the waste that is generated on farms.

We believe that clean and renewable energy is good for Pennsylvania, for our farm families, and for our nation's goal of ending dependence on foreign energy. Agriculture already has a footprint in renewable energy. According to the latest federal agriculture census, more than 4,100 farms in Pennsylvania use some form of renewable energy. The production of energy—especially its availability for use on farms and the development of home-grown sources—is a key interest area for Farm Bureau. We have long supported a multi-pronged approach to energy development, including the need to encourage renewable energy generation. Specifically, we support:

- Full research and development for the increased production of all forms of renewable energy from agricultural/forestry resources, including solutions to help producers effectively manage soil and water conservation issues and control invasive species.
- Private and public efforts to develop and promote new uses for agricultural products.
- Research into the viability and economic potential of agricultural products and commodities used for energy generation.
- Production and use of agricultural-based fuels.
- Research and demonstration programs that use renewable fuel as a fuel for fuel cell engine development.
- The Renewable Fuels Standard 2 (RFS2) as passed in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, and that Congress maintain administrative control over renewable volume obligations; and
- The availability of multi-grade non-ethanol gasoline for small engine, marine and boutique uses, and all agricultural uses.

Farm Bureau supports using renewable sources of electricity, including the use of biomass fuels for electric power generation whenever economically feasible, and believes that developing renewable fuels is critical in order to keep the costs of electrical energy affordable. A multiple-use management approach to renewable energy development and generation on the landscape will support and includes continued agricultural production.

Homegrown fuels, ethanol and biodiesel have helped reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lower gas prices, increase demand for corn and soybeans and decrease our dependence on foreign energy sources. Just as our food supply is a national security issue, so is our fuel supply. We are safer if we are less reliant on other countries for the fuel we need to keep our economy moving. And as other countries start to rely on our energy exports, we can build relationships and create opportunities to expand trade into other sectors of the economy.

Farm Bureau also recognizes the opportunities that exist to use the co-products of agricultural operations as alternative energy sources. We support continued research and education into ruminant and non-ruminant feed utilization of renewable fuel co-products, as well as the establishment and enforcement of national quality standards for renewable fuels and related co-products.

Finally, Farm Bureau understands the need to develop a robust infrastructure program to support the current and future development of “clean fuels” and other “waste-to-fuel” projects in Pennsylvania. We support timely certification of dispensing equipment for all renewable fuel products, including all storage tanks and pumping equipment. Our policy also calls for streamlining and expediting the process for issuing permits for the construction and operation of refineries to produce renewable fuels and coal gasification, and for distributing renewable fuels via pipelines or other cost-effective means.

Homegrown, renewable fuel has been an American success story, and expanding its use in Pennsylvania makes sense as the Commonwealth strives to create expanded economic growth and opportunity. Although the road to success has sometimes been less than smooth, we must keep paving the way to ensure a sustainable future with renewable fuels. Farm Bureau is committed to supporting energy options that keep farmers farming and in control of their property for generations to come, and finding ways to use more farm waste to generate energy ensures that outcome.

Thank you again for your time today, and I look forward to your questions.