COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS AMONG ETHANOL BACKERS TO REBUILD REPUTATION

WASHINGTON, DC--Today four of the nation’s largest ethanol producers announced the collaborative new organization, Growth Energy, to offer a “fresh, aggressive new voice in the energy debate,” said Bob Dinneen, president of the Renewable Fuels Association.

The announcement comes as the industry’s latest rebuttal to critics who have blamed corn-based fuels for rising food prices, “a sham cooked up by the food industry,” said Dinneen. Just one week after the election, this is just one of several efforts ethanol backers are using to carefully position themselves favorably with a new Congress and new president.

Insiders say that ethanol producers are focusing their revamp efforts on two separate fronts. Publicly, they are trying to improve their reputation with consumers and dispel any information about ethanol’s negative effects on food prices. Among government officials and lawmakers, they are trying to win support for higher blends, increasing the percent of ethanol allowed in gasoline mixtures from 10 percent to 12 or 13 percent.

Not surprisingly, lobbyists of all U.S. industries are trying to get the attention of President-elect Barak Obama, but ethanol supporters are particularly hopeful at the prospects.

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“I think Obama gives us a sense of confidence,” said Dinneen, “Senator Obama shares our commitment.” Obama from Corn Belt centered Illinois, is familiar with the majority of ethanol producers. Obama has supported biofuels in the U.S. Senate and verbalized the need for the expansion of alternative fuel sources extensively throughout his presidential campaign.

With the collaborative efforts towards the creation of Growth Energy, producers and supporters now have a single voice to be heard in Washington, instead of the many voices that were fighting on their own.

“We are taking the necessary steps to further our industry,” said Dinneen, “and Growth Energy is just the first step of many more to come.”

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