



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

July 14, 2010

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I commend you for convening a meeting today with business leaders and researchers from around the country involved in the effort to develop aviation biofuels. Several of the leaders you are meeting represent Washington State organizations, such as Boeing and Washington State University, and I am personally familiar with their groundbreaking efforts to bring aviation biofuels to market. I am writing to express my strong support for the vision promoted by these organizations of a sustainable U.S. aviation biofuels industry. I am pleased to know they will have the opportunity to discuss that vision with you personally, and I hope their efforts gain the Administration's energetic support.

As you know, the Pacific Northwest has been a leader in the effort to develop effective aviation fuels from biomass feedstocks. Just this week, a consortium of public, private, and non-profit entities launched Sustainable Aviation Fuels Northwest (SAFN), a strategic initiative to promote aviation biofuel development in the Pacific Northwest. The SAFN initiative will perform a comprehensive, regional assessment of the economics, potential feedstocks, and technical and policy hurdles associated with developing a commercially-viable aviation biofuels industry in the Northwest. This comprehensive regional analysis will be the first of its kind in the United States.

On the commercial front, the Northwest is home to vibrant entrepreneurs in the aviation biofuels arenas. Companies such as Targeted Growth, Sustainable Oils, AltAir Fuels, Boeing, Honeywell UOP, Tesoro, and Alaska Airlines, among others, have joined forces to develop the supply chain for delivering sustainable, biomass-derived jet fuel from the laboratory to the farm to the refinery to the airport. These pioneers are developing new technologies, new markets, and new business models.

I believe the biofuels industry holds great promise for our nation to revitalize rural agricultural communities, foster economic growth, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and cut our dependence on foreign oil. Yet there are significant hurdles to achieving commercial viability. It has been my great privilege over the past several years to promote legislation designed to help biofuels overcome these hurdles. While these initiatives have been aimed primarily at biofuels for surface transportation, I believe the emerging opportunities for biofuels in aviation are

potentially even more significant. The industry will require our support to reach its potential. As you contemplate options for providing that support, please consider me a partner in the United States Senate.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator