



THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

MEMORANDUM

July 13, 2012

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Energy and Power

FROM: Subcommittee on Energy and Power Staff

RE: Hearing on “The American Energy Initiative”

On Tuesday, July 17, 2012, at 3:00 p.m. in 2123 of the Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee on Energy and Power will hold the twenty-sixth of a multi-day hearing entitled “The American Energy Initiative.” This day of the hearing will focus on the role of Federal agencies in alternative transportation fuels and vehicles. Witnesses are expected to discuss the responsibilities of the Federal government in implementing the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and other alternative fuels and vehicles programs, as well as Federally-supported research and development of new fuels and vehicle technologies.

I. WITNESSES

Mr. Howard Gruenspecht
Deputy Administrator
U.S. Energy Information Administration

Ms. Margo Oge
Director, Office of Transportation and Air Quality
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Dr. Kathleen Hogan
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency
U.S. Department of Energy

II. BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and other statutes, a host of Federal programs are underway to develop and deploy alternatives to petroleum-derived motor fuels and the vehicles that run on them. High gasoline prices and Middle East instability have heightened the public’s interest in these efforts.

Each alternative transportation energy source - biofuels, electricity, natural gas, methanol and others - offers a unique mix of potential benefits as well as economic and technological obstacles to overcome. Some require advances in vehicles for which research and development is ongoing. Some necessitate changes to the existing motor fuel supply chain, while others will need an entirely new infrastructure. Many entail costs that need to be reduced in order to expand market penetration. The most widely deployed alternative fuel to date is corn-based ethanol, which is a major part of the RFS established in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, and other statutes.

Federal agencies play a critical role in these efforts, both in the implementation of existing alternative fuel and vehicle programs, as well as research efforts in alternative fuels and vehicles.

This hearing will focus on governmental perspectives only. A separate non-governmental day of the hearing was held on July 10, 2012.

III. ISSUES

The following issues will be examined at the hearing:

- Current status of the RFS, and emerging challenges facing EPA in its implementation of the program;
- EPA's approval process for new fuels and vehicles;
- EIA projections of future alternative fuel and vehicle trends, and the assumptions behind them; and,
- DOE efforts to conduct research into alternative fuels, vehicles, and infrastructure.

IV. STAFF CONTACT

If you have any questions regarding this hearing, please contact Ben Lieberman at (202) 225-2927.