

U.S. SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL WASHINGTON

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CONTACT: PRESS OFFICE (202) 224-8277

CANTWELL URGES AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TO SUPPORT AVIATION BIOFUELS INITIATIVE

In letter to Vilsack, supports efforts to develop agriculture-based jet fuel -- initiatives reduce foreign oil dependence, emissions, and benefit WA farmers

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to support public-private initiatives in Washington state to develop aviation biofuels for military and commercial aircraft. In a to Vilsack, Cantwell said research has shown the technical viability of turning crops and biomass into aviation fuel, securing a reliable domestic supply for our military and commercial jets. The letter came as Vilsack met with corporate and academic representatives working on aviation biofuels projects, including Boeing Co. and Washington State University. A strong supporter of biofuels for surface transportation, Cantwell, who chairs the Energy Subcommittee of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said aviation biofuels offer potentially greater economic opportunity for farmers, aviation and transportation, and U.S. energy independence.

"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," Senator Cantwell said. "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."

There are several ongoing efforts to utilize biofuels in the Pacific Northwest, including:

- Sustainable Aviation Fuels Northwest (SAFN): This initiative, announced on Monday, will examine economics, potential feedstocks, and technical and policy hurdles to developing an aviation biofuels industry in a four-state area in the Pacific Northwest. The study, the first of its kind in the United States, is being performed by Climate Solutions, a Seattle-based non-profit organization. The Steering group consists of Boeing, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, Portland International, Alaska Airlines, WSU, and Climate Solutions.
- AltAir: This is a commercial arrangement to produce jet fuel from camelina crops for Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Fourteen airlines, including Alaska Airlines, are

participating. The plan is to grow camelina in Montana, transport the crop to Anacortes for refining, and then ship the jet fuel via pipeline to SeaTac.

Cantwell has long fought to increase the use of biofuels from non-food feedstocks, including helping author the 2007 Renewable Fuels Standard which requires the production of 36 billion gallons of biofuels by 2022. The Senator has focused on supporting the biodiesel industry, which has particular promise in Washington state, by introducing bipartisan legislation (S.1589) which is cosponsored by 14 other Senators and would provide a long-term boost to the industry with a five year extension and reform of the biodiesel production incentive. She is also fighting for a one-year extension of the biodiesel production tax credit through the end of 2010, which would be retroactive to January 1, 2010, and is vital for the fledgling industry. Previously Cantwell worked with colleagues to push through the last extension of the biodiesel credit, which was enacted in the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008.

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