

***Remarks prepared for delivery by Congressman Spencer Bachus at the grand opening of the Dogwood Shell biofuels station in Vestavia Hills on March 10, 2008. □ The station is part of the Alabama Clean Corridor initiative, a program to establish a network of clean-burning ethanol and biodiesel filling stations along I-65.***

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This is a significant event in our quest for “energy independence.”

We all know that the U.S. is dangerously dependent on foreign oil. America imports almost 60% of our oil. That percentage has increased, not decreased, since the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973.

This gives too much power to OPEC and countries hostile to the U.S.

Even though oil prices are at an all-time high, at more than \$100 a barrel, OPEC this past week refused to increase production – despite the potential effects on the world economy. We can't continue to rely on imported oil, especially when some of it comes from unstable countries that may be hostile to our interests.

In his State of the Union Address, President Bush set a goal of reducing U.S. oil imports from the Middle East by 75% by the year 2025. He set another goal of reducing gasoline usage by 20% in the next ten years.

The way to do that is through energy diversity. Alabama certainly has a seat at the energy table when it comes to coal resources and Citronelle.

Nuclear power plays an important role.

Alternative fuels developed and produced right here in the U.S. are also part of the mix.

Biofuels like ethanol and biodiesel are good for

the economy and good for the environment. They are derived from crops so they help our farmers, they burn cleaner, and they create jobs.

Those dollars are kept here in the U.S.

Alabama is in a great position to be a leader in renewable fuels.

We're on the first and longest biofuels corridor in the nation – the Great Lakes to Gulf of Mexico I-65 Clean Biofuels Corridor, 886 miles.

Dogwood Shell is the first biofuels station to open on I-65. More than 200,000 pass by this station every day, so it has high visibility – the highest of any of the five biofuel stations in the Alabama Corridor.

There are a couple of keys to moving any new technology along – consumer demand and the infrastructure to support it. We have it all here.

First, there is the production. The biodiesel sold at this station is made in Birmingham.

Ethanol can be made from not only corn, but from wood, switchgrass, and other raw materials and Alabama can be a leader in that.

As more people use biofuels, investment and jobs will grow.

Next, consumers need to purchase the vehicles. There is consumer demand here. In Jefferson County, 6.6% of all the

registered vehicles are flex fuel vehicles.

That represents about 17% of all flex fuel vehicles in the State of Alabama, by far the highest concentration in the state.

Of course, consumers won't buy the vehicles if they don't have a place to fill their tanks. You need a network of stations, like we'll have on the I-65 corridor, and that makes Dogwood Shell very important.

As we produce more biofuels, sell more vehicles, and build more stations. Once again, you will see the private market making the investments to meet the demand.

This will add not just to our energy diversity – but to the diversity of our economy – and in the Birmingham area, we know how important it is to have diversity in our industry.

Of course, there are enormous environmental benefits as well. Jefferson County is a non-attainment county for air quality – increased use of ethanol and biodiesel will help to improve our air quality.

These fuels are renewable as opposed to just petroleum where once it's been drilled, it's gone.

It's very important that Alabama take the lead in biofuels. We've had great success attracting automobile manufacturing in recent years – and this is the next step in the technology.

General Motors E85 fleet is an example of where the industry is heading on the use of alternative fuels.

We want Alabama be on the cutting edge when it comes to the next generation of not just manufacturing – but fuels and consumer use.

Alabama has a long history of advances in technology – from the Space and Aerospace Industry in Huntsville to UAB Medical Research in Birmingham enhanced by the facilities and capabilities of our outstanding universities.

Innovation is always the key to being an industry leader. This event today is an example of innovation right here at home.

We can be proud that the Birmingham area will be known as a leader in alternative fuels.

This also sends a message that there is a way for the U.S. to become more energy independent, and that's something that ought to draw national attention to the Birmingham area.

So I commend everyone  
involved with today's event.

The McPherson Oil  
Company which owns  
Dogwood Shell;

Alternative Fuel Supplier Bart  
Rice of Allied Renewable  
Energy/Rice Oil Company;

General Motors for its E85 promotion;

The Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition and the many groups that are promoting the use of biofuels in our state;

This is an exciting day for renewable fuels that sends a strong message that we are finally serious about energy independence.



