



CONTACT

Patrick Serfass, Executive Director
202-640-6595, ext. 366
psersfass@ttcorp.com

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American Biogas Council Applauds Obama Administration for Biogas Funding Announcement

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack: 'Projects such as this are a key part of the all-of-the-above approach to American energy.'

WASHINGTON— Today, the American Biogas Council applauded the Obama Administration for connecting biogas to its all-of-the-above approach to America's energy challenges. Monday, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced a \$5 million payment from his agency to support the construction of a new biogas system at a cattle farm in Oakley, KS. Biogas is produced from organic waste using a natural process called anaerobic digestion.

The completed project will replace almost 90 percent of the fossil fuels currently used by the farm, and is expected to create 15 full-time positions and almost 100 additional construction opportunities.

In announcing the grant, Secretary Vilsack underscored the role biogas plays in meeting renewable electricity and gas needs. Biogas systems produce a continuous stream of methane-rich gas that can be used for baseload renewable electricity and as a renewable substitute for natural gas. "Projects such as this are a key part of the Obama Administration's all-of-the-above approach to American energy that is supporting the development and usage of renewable energy, revitalizing rural economies and creating an America built to last," said Vilsack.

Biogas systems utilize mature technology that has been used for decades in a small part of a niche sector: wastewater treatment. However, biogas plants have much wider rural and urban applications anywhere there is organic waste, such as food scraps, restaurant greases, farm waste, wastewater sludge and more.

"The biogas market is essentially untapped in the U.S., which presents a huge opportunity for American businesses to turn garbage into green energy using a contained, natural, biological process," said Patrick Serfass, Executive Director of the American Biogas Council.

The American Biogas Council has identified 2,200 operational biogas projects and over 12,000 potential sites yet to be developed in the wastewater (3,300), agriculture (8,200), landfill (500) and industrial and commercial sectors. Biogas could replace 10% of America's electricity needs with renewable, 24-7 power.

“We thank President Obama, his Administration and especially Secretary Vilsack for recognizing the valuable opportunity we have to build our economy by building systems that turn organic waste into versatile, reliable renewable energy,” said Paul Greene, Chairman of the Board for the American Biogas Council. “This announcement has been a key ingredient in the recipe we’re using to accelerate the U.S. biogas industry. The project exemplifies the combination of factors needed: public awareness, willing investors, community support and an open mind to approaches for waste management. ”

The grant was made under USDA Rural Development’s Repowering Assistance Program. The American Biogas Council urges Congress to reauthorize and fund these important energy programs in the next Farm Bill.

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About the American Biogas Council

The non-profit American Biogas Council represents 150 companies dedicated to maximizing the production and use of biogas from organic waste. Members include anaerobic digester developers/builders, engine and turbine manufacturers, farmers, wastewater utilities, landfill operators, engineering and law firms, financiers, non profits, universities and the entire biogas supply chain. www.americanbiogascouncil.org