Gov. Perry Remarks at the Terrabon Facility Dedication

Company to turn bio-mass into energy

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.

Friday, November 07, 2008

Thank you, Malcolm [McNeill, Chief Financial Officer] for that introduction and congratulations on this remarkable new facility.

I am always glad to tread the hallowed ground here in College Station. Seems like the closer I get to campus, the better I feel.

As I look around here today, I see what happens when hard-working people invest their resources, their time, their money, and their effort, into an idea that can make a difference.

If everything here at Terrabon goes as planned, I believe you'll be making a difference that will be felt all around the world.

We live in a generation where the worldwide demand for energy continues to rise, and traditional energy sources are often controlled by powers that are not exactly fans of the American way of life.

That is why energy independence is a rallying cry for our state and our nation.

As someone who did his share of rallying cries over at Kyle Field, I am happy to see that some Aggie ingenuity is moving us in that direction, toward an all-of-the-above approach to energy, the only approach that will keep Texas truly competitive in the global marketplace.

This ceremony comes at a good time…I’ve been talking about renewable energy quite a bit over the past few months.

On the good side, Texas is a national leader in this area. Thanks to significant investment by entrepreneurs, we have the highest installed
wind energy capacity of any U.S. state. In fact, we have more wind generation capacity than all but three countries.

We are also making great strides in other renewable sources like biofuels because private-sector companies like Terrabon are risking their own capital on great ideas. Private sector efforts are what move technology forward, get products to market, and create jobs…not government mandates.

That’s where we get to the downside of the renewable energy conversation. You may be aware that I’m not a big fan of government mandates, especially when they are misguided attempts to pick winners and losers in the marketplace.

I still believe that the EPA’s mandates on corn-based ethanol usage are not only harmful to our beef and poultry producers, but they’re driven more by misinformation and hysteria than they are on sound science.

If I were a betting man, I would say that those mandates are just the latest salvo from Washington, and more like them are on the way.

That is why I recently created the Texas Advisory Panel on Federal Environmental Regulations. This group of experts will enable Texas to engage with Washington and try to head off more misguided environmental regulations that stifle productivity, kill job creation, and do no discernible good.

Take, for example, the Lieberman-Warner energy regulation bill that was batted around in the last Congress.

If something like that legislative nightmare is ever passed, energy producers and manufacturers in our state would eventually get hit with an annual tax bill that would approach our state’s annual budget in size.

Nevermind that there would likely be no discernable reduction in the emissions being targeted by that bill, except the reduction that would result when this country’s manufacturing and energy industries shut down operations.

That is not progress, it is not good for America, and we will fight restrictions like it with all the resources at our disposal.

In the meantime, I encourage you and entrepreneurs all across our state to continue pursuing your ideas, like the technology here at Terrabon.

Thanks to some innovative research by the folks here at Texas A&M, this facility will be turning non-food biomass into fuel, “green” adhesives and other important products. This facility represents the culture of innovation residing here at Texas A&M and yielding new ideas across our state.

For Texas to be competitive in the global marketplace, we need to keep finding new ideas like this, refining them, and taking some risk to produce and market them.

That is ultimately how we as a state and a nation will advance the next generation of energy technologies, through innovation and competitive markets, not expansive new regulations, government bureaucracies, and taxes.

Ideas like yours, practical, innovative solutions to the energy challenge, are a recurring theme in our state’s history.

Ideas like yours will produce energy, create jobs and draw investment. Ideas like yours will keep Texas at the forefront of renewable energy production. Ideas like yours will help Texas continue its strong performance in the midst of our country’s economic challenges.

In the same way that Texas long ago set the pace in petroleum production and refining, we are now leading the way
into a new era of renewable energy production, which will move us closer to energy independence.

This independence will preserve and improve our quality of life, make our state and our nation more secure, and sustain our state’s status as the best place on earth to live, work and raise a family.

I wish everyone associated with this noble effort the best as you work to keep Texas at the forefront of the world's renewable energy industry.

May God bless you all and through you, may He continue to bless the great state of Texas.