

**Opening Statement of Chairman Walden
Subcommittee on Environment
“Advanced Biofuels Under the Renewable Fuel Standard: Current Status and
Future Prospects”
June 22, 2018**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for recognizing me for this opening statement.

As you mentioned in your remarks, today’s hearing is the first time in this subcommittee’s hearing series on the future of fuels and vehicles where we have directly tackled advanced biofuels. Before I get to more general remarks on that subject, I want to observe how today’s subject highlights a problem facing my constituents and a solution that could help the nation in several ways.

Mr. Chairman, I know you are very proud of the corn and soybean growers in Illinois that you represent. In Oregon, we’re equally proud of the generations of foresters and millworkers who have been helping manage our forests since the days of the Oregon Trail.

As we learned in our hearing last October on air quality impacts from wildfires, federal forests in Oregon and across the West face the threat of catastrophic wildfires pumping harmful particulates and carbon into the atmosphere. Our witnesses that day made clear the importance of thinning our forests and removing the fuel that’s out there. A key component of this preventative management is addressing chips and slash material that are volatile in

a fire and help carry the fire up into the tree canopy. With limited economic value for this wood product, much of it is burned in piles in the winter. While this is much better than a wildfire, an even better alternative is to utilize this wood as a carbon neutral energy source to power our vehicles.

We used to think the main barrier to garnering sustainable and economic wood-based biofuels was technical in nature – such as developing ways to economically remove lignin from forest materials. That in turn would allow us to access and utilize the valuable cellulosic material for productive, value-added purposes.

However, it turns out that beyond the technical barriers, another significant barrier to growing the use of sustainable wood-based biofuels is the arbitrary limits established within the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). Specifically, the RFS renders biofuels sourced from woody biomass off federal land ineligible for RIN credits. As a result of these RFS limits, we are missing another opportunity to clean up and improve the management of our federal lands. Going forward, I hope we can address this matter.

As for the broader topic of advanced biofuels, the 2007 amendments to the Renewable Fuel Standard were passed with the expectation of a fully mature advanced biofuels marketplace – one that, four years from now, was supposed to

be 28 percent larger than that of corn-based ethanol and other first-generation biofuels. While some people think it was a mistake then to include cellulosic biofuels in the RFS, the fact is they are not going away and should be part of any discussion on this complex and interdependent program. For this reason, it is important that when discussing the RFS program we keep these fuels in mind.

I want to thank our witnesses for joining us to share their experiences and expertise on this subject. We appreciate them taking time out of their busy schedules to help us better understand intricacies of advanced biofuels.

Thank you, again, Mr. Chairman for the time. With that, I yield back.