

Transportation Bill Extends Ethanol Tax Incentive

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Corn growers and all Americans can breathe easier today, thanks to congressional passage of an omnibus transportation bill that extends the federal ethanol tax incentive through 2007.

HR 2400, the Building Efficiency Surface Transportation Equity Act (BESTEA), was approved overwhelmingly by both the House and Senate in May.

"This landmark legislation marks a major victory for all Americans who will reap the benefits of cleaner air, new jobs, increased farm income, rural economic development, lower fuel costs, and reduced U.S. dependence on foreign oil," said National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) President Ryland Utlaut, a farmer from Grand Pass, Mo.

The conference report on H.R. 2400 passed the senate by a 88-5 vote, and was then cleared by the House 297-86. NCGA is urging President Clinton to act quickly to sign the measurement into law.

Currently, gasoline marketers who blend their product with ethanol can claim a 5.4-cent-per-gallon exemption from the federal gasoline excise tax. That exemption was scheduled to expire on Dec. 31, 2000. The final language in the transportation bill extends the incentive through December 31, 2007, with modest reductions to 5.3 cents in 2000-2001, 5.2 cents in 2005 and thereafter.

"Congressional supporters of an environmentally and economically sound energy policy, accompanied by farmers across the United States, worked long and hard to

ensure this vital incentive was preserved," Utlaut said. "We owe a particular debt of gratitude to a number of key policymakers whose drive and motivation ensured that sound public policy triumphed over politics."

"Chief among them are Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Carol Moseley-Braun (D-IL), the original authors of the extension provision. We also appreciate the efforts of Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND) and Reps. Jim Nussle (R-IA) and Kenny Hulshof (R-MO). They, along with Sen. Grassley, served on the conference committee that crafted the final details of the bill," Utlaut noted.

Utlaut also praised the co-chairs of the congressional Alcohol Fuels Caucus — Reps. David Minge (D-MN), Lane Evans (D-IL), Bill Barrett (R-NE) and Nussle — who worked long and hard to build bipartisan support for



the ethanol extension. In addition, he cited the leadership of House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA), House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt (D-MO), Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) and Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD), all of whom instrumental in ushering the extension through the legislative process. Finally, the backing of the Clinton administration, particularly Vice President Al Gore and Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, was invaluable in assuring that the extension became a reality.

Utlaut also acknowledged the individual efforts of many thousands of corn growers and other ethanol supporters nationwide who have worked tirelessly to educate policy

makers about ethanol's benefits to the economy, the environment and U.S. energy security. "Their letters, phone calls and meetings with elected officials obviously reaped rich dividends and proved the power of grassroots democracy," he said.

"This transportation bill will provide a tremendous boost to the domestic ethanol industry, an industry that creates jobs, boosts farm income, stimulates rural economies, cleans the air, saves taxpayers millions of dollars and it helps reduce our nation's dependence on imported oil," Utlaut said. "Inspired by this victory, the nation's corn farmers are more committed than ever to ensuring a long and viable future for this home-grown, renewable fuel."

Farmers Union Applauds Commitment To Ethanol

WASHINGTON, D.C. — National Farmers Union (NFU) applauded U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich for the recent appointment to a conference committee House members who support the ethanol tax incentive program.

The conference committee is charged with reaching a compromise on the House and Senate versions of the highway bill which extends ethanol tax incentives through 2007," said NFU President Ieland Swenson. "We are extremely pleased with Speaker Gingrich's decision to appoint ethanol supports to the conference committee. Gingrich's action follows strong leadership by House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., and Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D.S.D."

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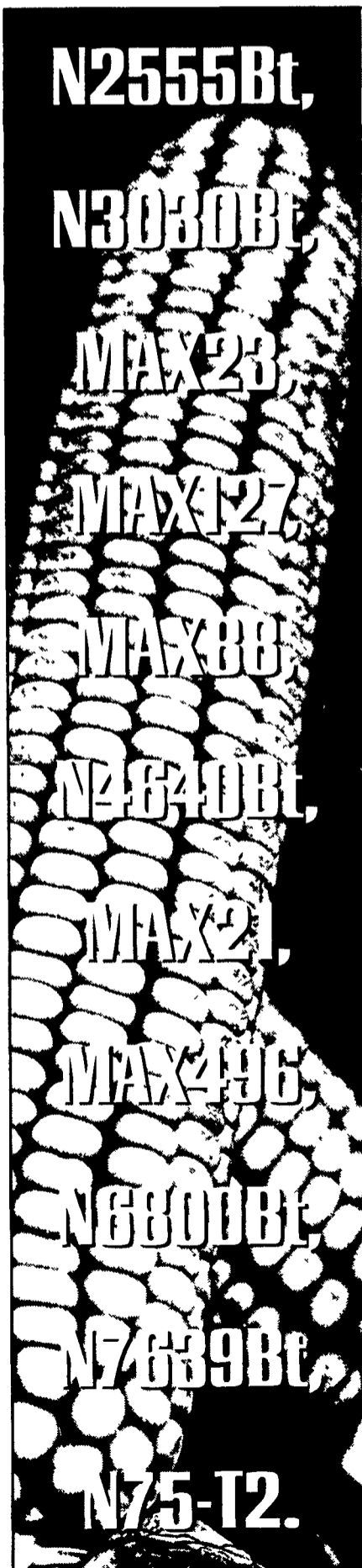
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