

May 13, 2025

Honorable Tim Schaffer
Chairman
Ohio Senate Agriculture Committee
1 Capitol Square
Room 137
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chairman Schaffer,

Growth Energy is the world's largest association of biofuel producers, representing 97 U.S. plants that each year produce more than 9.5 billion gallons of cleaner-burning, renewable fuel, including five of Ohio's seven biorefineries. We also represent 131 businesses and groups, including the Ohio Corn and Wheat Growers Association, working with them and tens of thousands of biofuel supporters around the country. Together, we remain committed to bringing better and more affordable choices at the fuel pump to consumers, helping our country diversify our energy portfolio in order to grow more energy jobs, sustaining family farms, and driving down the costs of transportation fuels for consumers.

Today, 98 percent of all gasoline sold in the U.S. contains 10 percent bioethanol. E15, a fuel containing up to 15 percent bioethanol, is now available at more than 4,000 retail locations in 33 states, and higher bioethanol blends such as E85 are available at nearly 6,000 sites around the country. In Ohio, there are currently only 166 retail fuel locations selling E15. Less than two percent of the state's estimated 8,894 retail fuel locations offer E15.¹ Compare this to Minnesota, with half of Ohio's population, that has more than 500 retail locations offering E15.

E15 is approved for all 2001 and newer vehicles, more than 96 percent of all light duty vehicles on the road today. Most vehicles require a minimum octane rating of 87. Bioethanol, with an octane rating of 113, helps meet that in modern cars. Bioethanol is a cleaner, renewable, and cost-effective alternative to toxic chemicals like lead and MTBE.² E15 is also typically less expensive than E10, with Ohio drivers seeing a 20 to 25 cent price difference. Consumers have now driven more than 140 billion miles on E15, and retailers have conducted millions of transactions with this fuel. There have been no adverse reports of fuel quality experienced with E15 since first being approved 13 years ago.

As the Ohio Senate works through the state's biennial budget, Growth Energy encourages the Senate Agriculture Committee to consider a budget item in the House's budget legislation that

¹ <https://www.xmap.ai/blog/gas-station-data-insights-of-ohio-state-an-insightful-guide-for-businesses>

² <https://growthenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/GBIO-24100-Engine-Performance-2024-11-12-R2-1.pdf>

helps provide a temporary boost to Ohio's corn growers via a five-cent per gallon incentive for retailers to offer and sell fuels with higher blends of ethanol. A similar incentive has passed the Ohio House the previous two General Assemblies. The incentive, as passed by the Ohio House in H.B. 96, would help Ohio corn growers with increased domestic demand for their product as international markets are experiencing continued uncertainty while USDA forecasts a potential 25% decline in farm income.

A \$10 million investment in higher bioethanol blends will result in as much as \$57 million in *additional* corn purchases by bioethanol producers and the production of an additional 200 million gallons of E15. This increased production in bioethanol would also result in the availability of an additional 29 million pounds of nutrient-rich animal feed, an important co-product in the bioethanol production process, for Ohio livestock farmers.

Additionally, the proposal as passed by the Ohio House contains important cost containment measures, ensuring the grant prioritizes and targets *new* E15 sales and provides a \$100,000 per fuel retail location cap on eligibility. At a time when state legislatures are focused on being discerning and responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars, these measures are important to guaranteeing the state's investment in E15 *expands* the market and increases the upstream benefits to Ohio corn growers and the downstream benefits to consumers.

A number of Midwestern states have adopted or are considering an incentive for the sale of higher bioethanol blends. A similar five-cent per gallon incentive being considered in Indiana for bioethanol, which when combined with an incentive for biodiesel sales, would add more than \$100 million to that state's GDP annually. When considering the consumer savings and the benefits to both Ohio agriculture and bioethanol producers, a temporary incentive will boost economic activity and benefit the state's bottom line.

Given our experience with retailers around the country offering bioethanol blends, we are happy to assist the committee with technical questions as it considers initiatives that help strengthen domestic demand for Ohio-raised corn and Ohio-made bioethanol.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dallas Gerber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dallas" being more prominent than the last name "Gerber".

Dallas Gerber
Director of State Government Affairs
Growth Energy