

Michaud Announces Major Federal Investment in UMaine Energy Research

Tuesday, September 09 2008

WASHINGTON, DC -

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"The University of Maine is on the cutting edge when it comes to research and development in our state," said Michaud. "This funding is very welcome news. At a time when Mainers are having a hard time filling their gas tanks and purchasing heating fuel for the winter, this type of research is desperately needed."

According to the University of Maine, there are 4 components of the project:

1. Production of Higher Alcohol Liquid Biofuels: While other alternative energy options create electricity, liquid fuels for cars and other modes of transportation are needed. This project produces higher alcohols (superior to current alcohols used) that behave more like gasoline and blend better with oil than current alcohols being used.

2. Using Acidogenic Digestion: Fermentation using an ecosystem of organisms. This creates organic acids that can be converted to alcohols for biofuels. This process is different from current biofuel methods in that it can use waste materials for fermentation, does not require a sterile environment and produces acids such as vinegar using a more robust conversion method.

3. Chemical Upgrading:

Turns these acids into higher alcohols to be used for biofuels. Each of these operations has been researched individually. The UMaine project will demonstrate this technology integrated from start to finish, determining the yields through the entire process.

4. Using Industrial Biomass

Streams: The project will make use of waste biomass resources from a pulp mill and a sea-weed processing plant that would otherwise be disposed of as waste materials or low-value boiler fuel.

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