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Missouri fulfills obligation to biodiesel plants

BY ALISHA SHURR ON MAY 17, 2018

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — The State of Missouri is fulfilling its obligation to biodiesel plants with the infusion of funds that originally were withheld due to concerns of a revenue shortfall.

“We didn’t do what we said we were going to do, we didn’t pay them for their efforts,” said Rep. Craig Redmon. “Today we are going to do that...we are going to do what government said they were going to do a long time ago.”

The announcement of \$4 million to pay off the backlog of subsidies for qualifying biodiesel plants was made Thursday morning by Gov. Eric Greitens. Those making the presentation were flanked by two tractors — a John Deere and a Massey Ferguson — and it was raining.

“This rain is economic development,” said Sen. Dan Brown. He also pointed out agriculture is the number one industry in Missouri and that biodiesel is also economic development.

Missouri produces nearly 200 million gallons of biodiesel in eight production facilities and directly supports 2,500 jobs in the state while indirectly supporting 6,400 more positions.

“For the last 8 years we have been asking Missouri leaders to make good on their promise,” said Warren Stemme.

The Missouri Biodiesel Producer Incentive Fund was created in 2002 to provide incentives for plants that were operating by 2009. To qualify state biodiesel facilities were required to be at least 51 percent owned by Missouri agricultural producers or which uses feedstock that is at least 80 percent of Missouri origin. Those that meet the requirements are eligible for a grant in any fiscal year equal to thirty cents per gallon for the first 15 million gallons produced from Missouri agricultural products and ten cents per gallon for the next 15 million gallons.

“We had the vision to get the biodiesel industry off the ground, made an investment,” said Brown.

“The biodiesel fund is a government program that worked,” said Stemme. “With it, Missouri farmers invested in new technology — biodiesel, which is a clean, renewable fuel.”

The funds have been limited or outright withheld for several years with concerns over revenue to balance a budget. In 2015, the Missouri Soybean Association came forward with a plan to get the debt paid off in three years. The \$4 million is the amount necessary to pay off the backlog.

“Paying this debt to biodiesel producers and farmers sets us up to continue moving forward,” said Stemme. “This is good for Missouri.”

He went on to say that this goes to the plant investors, to the farmers, and will help rural Missouri.

“We’re proud to fight for Missouri’s often-forgotten rural communities and farmers,” said Greitens. “These long-promised funds will help farmers and workers in rural communities across the state.”



Sen. Brian Munzlinger (ALISHA SHURR/THE MISSOURI TIMES).



Alisha Shurr

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