

Fred Mondragon, New Mexico Secretary Designate of Economic Development
Biodiesel Summit Talking Points
Friday, March 28, 2008

Good morning. It is my pleasure to be with you today to discuss the challenges we face in our efforts to develop what is sure to become one of our most important strategies in creating alternative fuels.

How much fossil fuel we have left at our disposal is debatable, but even the most optimistic estimates can't erase the fact that oil is a limited resource that at the current rate of consumption will only see a few generations through.

Frankly, the time to address this issue came and went decades ago, and only now are we getting serious about investigating alternatives. It is therefore incumbent upon us to make up for lost time - it is the purpose of this summit to do just that.

Yesterday, you discussed New Mexico's best opportunities in the biodiesel industry from an agricultural and technological viewpoint.

You learned that New Mexico's climate is perfectly suited to the cultivation of some of the most important biodiesel crops, and that our state's plentiful land and potential for agriculture have us poised to become a national - if not international - leader in this emerging industry.

My purpose here today is largely to ensure you that, along with Governor Richardson, I am committed to the ongoing process of solidifying New Mexico's role as THE Clean Energy State.

The biodiesel industry is critically important to the future of New Mexico's economy, and in many respects will help shape it for many generations to come.

We have a weighty responsibility to those future generations.

We must steward them in the innovation of new sustainable energy sources such as biodiesel so that we can rest easy knowing that our grandchildren and great grandchildren, and their children will have their energy needs met and their environment preserved.

Over the past five years, Governor Richardson has worked very hard to make New Mexico the Clean Energy state. We have made tremendous progress.

New solar manufacturers and wind farms are opening up, and we're reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

These efforts are protecting our environment, they are diversifying our energy portfolio and they are creating good, high-paying jobs for New Mexicans.

Let me quickly summarize some of the clean energy advances we have made at the state level in the past five years.

- * Implemented a new requirement that New Mexico utilities provide 10% renewable energy to customers by the year 2011;

- * Provided that utilities and coops will plan for energy efficiency - not just new energy supply;

- * Eliminated the sales tax on purchases of highly efficient hybrid vehicles;

* Built up our energy-saving transit system, including the new commuter rail service in the middle Rio Grande corridor;

* Set targets to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions by large percentages in coming decades.

In fact, no other state has made as many advances in clean energy policy in the past three years.

People from across the country and around the world are looking to New Mexico as a leader on clean and renewable energy.

Why is this so important?

First, because it's in our national security interest to free ourselves from Middle Eastern dependency.

As a society, we are addicted to oil, but the treatment for this problem must come from states like New Mexico and cities like Albuquerque - we cannot rely on Washington for the solutions.

Second, because we can create jobs and prosperity here in New Mexico and the United States instead of sending 250 billion dollars overseas every year for foreign oil.

I am here today to challenge you - the best and brightest in the emerging field of biodiesel - to identify those solutions and dedicate yourselves to implementing them.

The city of Albuquerque and the State of New Mexico have a common interest in developing sustainable energy in New Mexico.

Albuquerque is our state's economic engine. It has to be the main place where consumers, technologies, and new clean energy businesses meet.

With all the scientific know-how in New Mexico, with the national labs and startup ventures, and with so many business people who intimately understand the energy business, New Mexico is positioned to become the Nation's clean energy state.

With your leadership and support, New Mexico will forever be known as the clean energy capital of the world.

This isn't a pipe dream.

We have the resources - the wind and the sun - to maximize the opportunities here in New Mexico.

This is already happening. Last year, one of the biggest business wins for the whole state was Schott Solar. This company will create up to 1,500 good jobs at Mesa del Sol within the next few years.

We need to attract and create more Schotts, but in the biodiesel industry. Big venture capital firms are seeking out this particular field in our state. And we need to create more opportunity for these clean energy companies.

By supporting high-quality, sustainable community development, transit alternatives and parks, Albuquerque has positioned itself to attract these new, clean industries. And it can be done in other parts of New Mexico as well.

The truth is this: An Apollo-like program to encourage biodiesel and other renewables that

reduce our dependence on fossil fuels will keep a lot of money in our economy that had gone overseas to buy oil.

It's like the old union slogan: "Buy American." Homegrown energy is an economic winner.

It is up to us to create the momentum for a new, American-made energy future.

Together, we can create a clean energy revolution that will be THE economic wellspring of the 21st century - not just here in Albuquerque, but across the entire state.

Thank you.