



## **E85: A renewable resource improving the health of our families and our planet**

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E85, the ethanol-based fuel composed of 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline, is at the forefront of the alternative fuels forging into our every day lives. This comes at a time where we all strive to be "greener" and to improve the health and life of our families and our planet.

A benefit of E85 is that it is a predominantly renewable resource. Ethanol is produced mostly from corn or sugarcane (though other similar crops may be used), and therefore can continually be re-grown, re-harvested, and re-processed. Additionally, ethanol burns cleaner than gasoline from an emissions standpoint, yielding better air quality from the extensive daily travel on our crowded roadways. These attributes frame gasoline for what it is: a finite resource that will eventually run dry, as well as a carbon-emission spewing fuel that is contaminating our air and contributing to global warming.

There are skeptics who point out that ethanol has become such a valuable commodity that vast forest areas are being cleared across the globe to grow corn and sugarcane. While these crops are high yielding from a fuel-generating and profit standpoint, skeptics will point out that a reduction in the carbon-footprint is being achieved by eliminating a thriving forest. Also, some skeptics suggest that ethanol as a commodity for fuel takes away from the food supply and drives food prices higher for the consumer.

The skeptic's points, regardless of validity, cannot be taken lightly, but are certainly a short-term view. The use of ethanol in the future could result in a long-lasting, if not endless, fuel source that burns cleaner than gasoline. As a result of advancements in technology, ethanol can efficiently and cost-effectively be generated from crops-for-food waste products, as opposed to currently taking a slight share of the crops in general. Ethanol, when produced efficiently, can rival gasoline in price, even when adjusted for mileage. This would lead to healthy competition in the marketplace and could shift the balance of power from OPEC to a fuel that can easily and vastly be produced here in the U.S.A.

There are quotas mandated by the Federal Government for renewable fuels to amount to 7.5 billion gallons of our fuel base by 2012, and 36 billion gallons by 2022. Ethanol could satisfy this quota considerably. While this quota appears to be achievable by the refiners, there appears to be a shortfall in the infrastructure to get the fuel to the consumer. Flexible Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) are continually being manufactured, so the automobile industry is holding up their end of the bargain (Chrysler, GM, and Ford have pledged that 50% of their 2012 fleet will be FFVs). However, there are only approximately 1,800 stations pumping E85 fuel as of this writing, versus approximately 164,000 gasoline stations serving our nation.

Establishing the infrastructure to allow for ethanol to be brought to the marketplace in order to satisfy the quotas established by our government is crucial and getting ahead of the technology that

will allow for a smaller impact of ethanol on the economy-at-large will allow for a smooth transition. The approval processes to bring E85 to the NYC/Long Island markets are complicated and time-intensive, but with good reason since the FDNY, the NCFM, and the SCDHS are guardians of "safety at the pump" and our water supply.

The time is now to begin installing the infrastructure to bring this renewable, clean-burning, market-competitive fuel to our marketplace. Several local politicians are devoting substantial efforts to this mission, ensuring that we as consumers are provided with a choice, a choice that impacts our pockets, our environment, and ultimately, our future.

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