

Text Version for Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar's Biomass 2011 Keynote video

[The video shows Senator Klobuchar standing at the podium at the Biomass 2011 Conference, speaking to the audience.]

Senator Klobuchar: So we're here today to talk about affordable home-grown energy. I think you all know the need has never been... is... I've... greater in my home state—the difference that this can make when it comes to jobs. Minnesota right now has a 6.6% unemployment rate. I do think that we are now moving to the next stage of biofuels that we are looking at, from algae to switchgrass to corn stover.

But I think people need to realize that the biofuels are now 10% of our fuel supply, right? We make more of our fuel from biofuels than we make gas from the oil that we import from Saudi Arabia. So that just gives you a sense that this isn't just some little boutique thing on the side that people can decide, what some of my colleagues have. I don't know if I like that anymore. It is a substantial part of our fuel supply, and so that's one piece of it.

The other thing to remember is that the *Chicago Tribune* did a study and asked the question, if we cease to produce the 14 billion gallons of ethanol that we make every year, prices could go up at the pump by as much as a dollar forty per gallon, which is understandable given that it's such a substantial piece of our fuel supply.

So those are the arguments that we make in addition to the 450,000 jobs that this industry supplies at 21 plants in my state alone. And so we also are quite aware of the argument that we'll be able to get some kind of a renewable standard through Washington at some point, that we will be smart about how we do this.

I really see this as part of a bigger, competitive agenda for the country—that we need to be a country that makes stuff again, that thinks, that invents, that exports to the world, instead of a person that just relies on churning money. It's what... what we need to do is what Tom Friedman, who writes for the *New York Times*, writes, as you all know, a lot about energy—he's a Minnesota native—he calls it nation-building in our own nation. And I truly think that's what we need to talk about when we need to focus on energy in this country. Because, as we all know, it is our generation's version of the space race, but the finish line isn't going to be someone putting a flag on the moon. The finish line is whether the next generation biofuels plant is going to be built in Bemidji, Minnesota, or Beijing; or an electric car battery factory in Memphis, Tennessee, or in Mumbai; or a wind turbine manufacturer in San Jose, California, or in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

That's not like I don't want these other countries to do these things. That's great. But I want our country to be doing these things. And so that's what I truly believe this race is about—that we need to be an energy-independent America, a stronger, more innovative America, and that energy is a big part of it