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COMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–2003

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June 16, 2017

Troy Lyons
Associate Administrator for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, Nw, Room 3426 Wjc
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Lyons:

Enclosed, please find a copy of correspondence from my constituent Frank Turano.

This individual is inquiring about his company's petition results awaiting publication in the Federal Register. I would appreciate it if you would carefully review their comments and provide a response to these concerns.

Should you have any questions about this matter, please contact Lucy Shaw of my staff at 202-225-4016.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

John Sarbanes
Member of Congress

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Dr Frank Turano
Plant Sensory Systems
Chief Research Scientist
6204 Blackburn Lane
Baltimore, MD 21212

I am an owner of a small agricultural R&D company in Maryland called Plant Sensory Systems (PSS). My company has developed high sugar-producing beets that can be used for the production of biofuel. PSS is working with a farmer and land manager in central Florida to install a 5-million-gallon a year ethanol facility. The farmer plans to use sugar beets, in contrast to corn, as the primary feedstock. Beets produce high tonnage per acre with low inputs of valuable resources, such as water and fertilizer.

As a feedstock for biofuel, beets have lower greenhouse gas emissions, a lower carbon footprint, and produce more than twice the biofuel per acre compared with corn. In addition, beets can be grown in Florida, a state that has been hit hard by loss of citrus trees due to the citrus greening disease. Approximately 500K acres of citrus groves are fallow in Florida due to citrus greening. The disease has affected two important agriculture sectors in Florida, citrus and cattle producers. Citrus growers are looking for replacement crops and cattlemen are looking for an alternative to the citrus pulp used as a feed and fiber additive for dairy cows. The plan is to use beets to produce sugar for ethanol and the beet fiber for dairy feed.

Our company has petitioned the EPA for approval of a beet-to-ethanol production pathway. The agency analyzed the first half of the pathway, that is, the production of beets as a feedstock for ethanol production. The analysis has been posted on the EPA website as a Notice of Opportunity to Comment since January 2017 (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-01/documents/sugar-beets-fed-reg-notice-2017-01-18.pdf). The EPA analysis is ready for publication in the Federal Register but the Notice awaits posting on the Federal Register from your office. Once the Notice is published on the Federal Register the 30-day public comment period can begin. The financing associated with this Florida-based ethanol project would be positively affected by this petition moving forward. The plan is start the project in 2017 and to have the facility fully operational by 2018.

Thank you for your support on this matter.