

US launches renewable energy initiative

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The United States launched a renewable energy initiative to boost biofuel production to create jobs, lessen the effects of climate change and wean the country off oil imports, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack (pictured in September) said at the National Press Club on Thursday.

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Part of President Barack Obama's Food, Conservation, and [Energy](#) Act of 2008, the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) is a "national imperative" to assist the biofuels industry, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack told the National Press Club.

"By producing more biofuels in America, we will create jobs, combat global warming, replace our dependence on foreign oil and build a stronger foundation for the 21st century economy," he added.

The US Department of Agriculture said BCAP "provides assistance for the establishment and production of eligible renewable biomass crops," a statement said.

The program provides up to 75 percent of the cost of establishing eligible [perennial crops](#), as well as matching payments for transportation of eligible materials sold to qualified biomass conversion facilities.

"The Obama administration is aggressively supporting our nation's farmers, ranchers and producers of biofuels as they work to bring greater energy independence to America," Vilsack said.

He also announced a five-year agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration to develop jet fuel from forest and crop residues and other "green" feedstocks in order to decrease dependence on foreign oil and stabilize fuel costs.

Giant aircraft manufacturer Boeing said the announcement was "welcome news" for the commercial aviation industry.

"Through test flights with a number of our customers, we have proven that fuels made from plant matter and algae can power jet aircraft safely and efficiently, and we look forward in the months ahead to the approval of these fuels for commercial use," said Boeing Vice President for Environment and Aviation Policy, Billy Glover.

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