



November 11, 2024

Senator JD Vance
Vice President-Elect
288 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Vice President-Elect Vance,

On this Veterans Day, we write on behalf of the thousands of military veterans working in the U.S. ethanol industry to congratulate you on your election as our next Vice President and to thank you for your service in our nation's armed forces. We look forward to working closely with the incoming Trump-Vance administration to advance policies that support veterans and their families, enhance U.S. energy security, create good-paying jobs that cannot be outsourced, and deliver lower prices at the pump for American families.

Veterans for Renewable Fuels (VRF) is a group of U.S. military veterans currently working in America's ethanol industry. We founded the organization to create a support network for our industry's veterans and to recognize and celebrate the tremendous contributions they make to improving our national security through the production of American-made ethanol. According to the Department of Energy, nearly **one out of every six workers** in the U.S. ethanol industry is a military veteran.¹ In fact, the ethanol workforce has a higher concentration of veterans than any other segment of the U.S. energy industry, and our veteran density is three times that of the national labor force.

The prevalence of former military service members working in the ethanol industry comes as no surprise to us. Employment in the domestic renewable fuels sector allows veterans like us to continue honoring our commitment to make our nation stronger and more independent. We take enormous pride in the fact that we work in an industry that simultaneously improves America's energy security, economic vitality, and environmental quality. In addition, the ethanol industry has created tens of thousands of good jobs in rural communities across the country, allowing us to share with our families the small-town way of life that is central to American values and our cultural identity.

¹ ["DOE Study: Ethanol Industry Continues to Lead Energy Sector in Veteran Employment, Other Key Workforce Statistics."](#) August 29, 2024. Renewable Fuels Association.

In recent years, U.S. gas prices have been substantially influenced by developments in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and other regions. No one can credibly argue that the United States is truly “energy independent” as long as our energy prices remain highly susceptible to price shocks driven by geopolitical events. Yes, our nation’s energy market is undeniably more secure, resilient, and diversified than it was 20 years ago—and that’s great news for American consumers. But there is plenty of room for further progress.

Ethanol and other domestic renewable fuels hold the key to a safer and more secure American energy future. That is why VRF’s advocacy, in coordination with the Renewable Fuels Association, will focus on ensuring renewable fuels have a prominent role in our nation’s energy strategy. From removing outdated regulatory barriers that prevent year-round consumer access to fuel containing higher levels of ethanol (like E15) to protecting the Renewable Fuel Standard to reconsidering electric vehicle policies that increase dependence on foreign minerals, we look forward to working with your administration to capture ethanol’s full potential as a homegrown, low-cost, environmentally friendly energy source.

We would like to extend an open invitation to you and your team to visit one of the many ethanol biorefineries affiliated with our organization to learn more about our industry, its impact on veterans, and its contributions to our nation’s energy security and economic vitality. It would be our honor to host you for a tour and a discussion about our shared goals of American energy dominance, job creation in rural communities, and relief at the pump for hard-working families.

Sincerely,



Jeff Oestmann
CEO, Aztalan Bio LLC
Jefferson, Wisconsin
Co-chair, Veterans for Renewable Fuels
U.S. Marine Corps (1982-1993)



Tony Leiding
President, Trenton Agri Products LLC
Trenton, Nebraska
Co-chair, Veterans for Renewable Fuels
U.S. Army (2007-2015)



Geoff Cooper
President and CEO, Renewable Fuels Association
Director, Veterans for Renewable Fuels
U.S. Army (1998-2002)