



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Deputy Under Secretary for
International Trade
Washington, D.C. 20230

James Thomas
President
ASTM International
100 Barr Harbor Drive
West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959

Dear Mr. Thomas:

I am writing to convey to you for your consideration a White Paper on Internationally Compatible Biofuel Standards. The White Paper was commissioned by representatives of the governments of the United States, the European Commission and Brazil, in support of the policy goal of facilitating the expansion of global biofuels trade. The work underpinning the White Paper was carried out by two Task Forces composed of private and public sector experts in the field of biofuels from the United States, European Union and Brazil.

The Task Forces compared existing standards used globally for pure bioethanol and biodiesel – standards developed by ASTM International, the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas (ABNT) – and identified specifications that are already similar, those where there are differences which might be aligned by work on product standards and test methods, and those where fundamental differences are not deemed bridgeable in the foreseeable future.

As a result of the work of the Task Forces, cross-border cooperation on biofuel standards has been advanced significantly. A working environment has been established that can support future enhanced compatibility among the existing standards.

We applaud the important efforts of the Task Forces and encourage ASTM International, CEN and ABNT to take this critical technical work into consideration as part of their formal standards development and revision process, with the goal of promoting alignment and mitigating remaining differences among evolving standards and specifications. For ASTM International, I ask that you convey the White Paper to Committee D02 – petroleum products and lubricants – and ask the Committee to consider the Task Forces' recommendations and respond with plans to address them, where relevant. We recognize that ASTM International committees establish their work programs and priorities based on broad input from all stakeholders. We look to ASTM International's members to employ a priority-based approach in responding to the White Paper, as well as other policy drivers, and recognize that committee members will need to allocate their limited time and resources to specification issues that offer the greatest impact on meeting both stated biofuels policy goals and projected market demands of the future. I am also providing a copy of the report to the American National Standards



Institute (ANSI) with a request that they make the document available for review by other interested members of the standards and conformity assessment community.

Finally, the White Paper clearly points out that some of the issues of non-alignment of specifications can be traced to variable measurement procedures and methods. I wanted to make you aware that this has already led to increased engagement by national metrology institutes in the three regions and planned release of joint measurement standards to support testing and fuel development by the end of 2008. These developments will also facilitate enhanced compatibility and lower testing costs.

We understand that the next meeting of Committee D02 is scheduled for June 15-19, 2008. We would appreciate a response from you by the end of June outlining the Committee's response to the Task Forces' recommendations and plan to address priority biofuels specification issues. Please send your response to Dr. Willie May, Director, Chemical Science and Technology Laboratory, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), 100 Bureau Drive, Mail Stop 8300, Gaithersburg, MD 20899-8300, with a copy to me. If you or D02 members have any questions about the Task Force reports or follow up, please contact Dr. May, at willie.may@nist.gov, or (301) 975-8300.

Sincerely,



Michelle O'Neill

Enclosure

Cc: Willie May, NIST
Etc.