



## Iowa Chapter of The Wildlife Society

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### FINAL POSITION STATEMENT

#### IMPACTS OF BIOFUELS ENERGY DEVELOPMENT ON IOWA WILDLIFE

Biofuels are a potentially important renewable energy source, especially for transportation fuels. The technology can provide transportation fuels that are intended to reduce both conventional pollutants and greenhouse gas and carbon-based emissions. The public and many decision-makers generally believe that biofuels are environmentally benign or even beneficial, without considering the significant detriments these fuels can present for soil, water, fish and wildlife resources. The potential risks to fish and wildlife resources from biofuels need to be more clearly understood and addressed. Below are points the Iowa Chapter of The Wildlife Society (Iowa TWS) feels should be considered on this issue:

1. Iowa TWS strongly discourages the conversion of native habitats to energy crops.
  - Conversion of native habitats will result in net losses of biodiversity that will be impossible to replace through mitigation. Conversion of native habitats also results in losses of soil carbon and release green-house gases that reduces the life-cycle improvements of biofuels produced on those areas.
2. The use of non-native species for biofuels that are invasive or have potential to become invasive should not be allowed.
  - Wildlife benefits will be maximized using locally native, wildlife-friendly plant species adapted for U.S. regions.
  - Using the Weed Risk Assessment (WRA) screening protocols, those species determined to be invasive should be restricted for use as dedicated biofuels crops.
3. More research on the effects of biofuels on wildlife is needed. Such research should be designed to ensure collection of unbiased data that meet peer review and legal standards.
4. Encourage safe disposal and monitoring of biofuel byproducts to assure no negative impacts on aquatic systems through land application, disposal, or release.
5. More education is needed for the public and decision-makers on the trade-offs and benefits of all forms of energy, including biofuels.
  - Energy conservation efforts provide the most immediate reduction in energy production needs, and reduce potential impacts on wildlife and the environment.

- Perennial crops provide the best potential to reduce both conventional pollutants and greenhouse gas and carbon-based emissions and should be the focus of future research, rather than feedstocks that require annual tillage. If at all possible, a diversity of perennial crops should be considered to provide the best overall benefit to wildlife.
6. Make public policy and incentives for biofuels transparent to allow further analysis of the effectiveness of such actions and the responsible protection for fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.
  7. Encourage development and implementation of adaptive guidelines for managing, evaluating, and monitoring the fish and wildlife impacts of biofuels feedstocks, and incorporation of these guidelines into the permitting process to consider both the direct (facility construction and operation) and indirect (feedstock) impacts on fish and wildlife.
  8. Encourage greater coordination among state and federal agencies responsible for wildlife conservation, energy development, and regulation to ensure consistency in permitting requirements, monitoring, and research standards that consider wildlife impacts as a core part of the decision-making process.
  9. Promote sustainability for both energy production and environmental services from biofuels feedstocks and biofuels refineries or energy production plants, including the sustainability of fish and wildlife and their habitats.
  10. Encourage regional assessments of cumulative land-use, habitat conversion, and wildlife impacts from all energy sources.

Biofuels technology can supply a portion of renewable energy portfolios for transportation fuels that are intended to reduce both conventional pollutants and greenhouse gas and carbon-based emissions. However, the impacts, both negative and positive, on our wildlife resources and other natural resources must be considered when assessing the benefit of biofuels.

Approved by Executive Committee March 2015. Expires March 2020.