

Levin, Stabenow: Department of Energy to Award \$4.3 Million to Lansing's Michigan Biotechnology Institute

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WASHINGTON – Sens. Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, both D-Mich., hailed the Department of Energy award of \$4.3 million to the Michigan Biotechnology Institute (MBI) to support its ground-breaking work in converting non-food renewable resources to energy sources in an effort to reduce our reliance on foreign fuel imports. Specifically, the contract award announced today will support work on a pretreatment process, known as Ammonia Fiber Expansion, or AFEX, that was developed by Michigan State University Professor Bruce Dale after more than 20 years of development.

Sen. Levin said: “I have worked closely with MBI and MSU on this, and I believe their process can revolutionize the production of biofuels and eliminate the food versus fuel tradeoff, which will ultimately make biofuels more accessible and more efficient. The process they have developed – which uses ammonia to break down cellulosic and other non-food materials – is a key to unlocking biofuels as a viable alternative to fossil fuels. Michigan State is in an extraordinary position to be at the center of this revolution.”

“With prices at the pump over four dollars a gallon, it’s more important than ever to give consumers choices beyond gasoline,” said Sen. Stabenow. “American-made biofuels provide cleaner alternatives to foreign oil and more competition to combat high gas prices. New fuel technologies produced in Michigan help break the stranglehold of the oil companies and the Middle East cartels, while creating new jobs in Michigan. I am pleased this support for MBI’s groundbreaking work on new fuel technologies has been secured.”

MBI is a nonprofit entity, owned by the Michigan State University Foundation, that works with commercial, academic and government partners to bridge the gap between promising new biotechnology developments and the marketplace.