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Co-signed letter requesting funding for the Consortium for Plant Biotechnology Research (CPBR)

Neil Abercrombie Papers
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Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2005

The Honorable David Hobson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
2362 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hobson:

The Consortium for Plant Biotechnology Research (CPBR) is a non-profit corporation whose membership includes 36 leading U.S. research universities and 25 agribusiness companies and trade associations. We respectfully request the inclusion of $4 million in federal funds for this important program in the Department of Energy funds for the Consortium's efforts in the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

CPBR funded research is developing enzymatic processes to allow for the value-added use of under-utilized biomass resources such as agricultural, forestry and municipal waste. The technology being developed will lessen the nation's dependence on fossil fuels and thus, foreign energy supplies. The results will also be transferable to other processing industries such as biochemicals, animal feeds and detergent additives.

In the area of co-products, new research has developed a technology leading to the production of renewable, biodegradable plastics from plants at a cost competitive with petroleum-derived materials. A major U.S. company is working on commercializing this and related discoveries.

Another recently approved CPBR study is researching the precision targeting of gene expression in transgenic plants. This precise manipulation of plant genes will minimize unwanted ecological consequences and maximize environmental and industrial benefits of various plant crops. Further, regulatory acceptance associated with the deliberate release of genetically modified plants will be made easier with the demonstration of highly specific genetic manipulation.

Perhaps most compelling is CPBR's record of private sector matching and commercialization. For every federal dollar invested in CPBR, $2.30 worth of research has been conducted with private sector matching 130 percent private sector matching of federal investment. In addition, CPBR has managed to accelerate its commercialization rate to three years, as compared to the ten year industry average.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and your support for an effective renewables research program.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Neil Abercrombie

Bob Ethereal

Dale Pin

Deborah Ruyer

Bart Tupak

Tom Orlowe