

## 'Good-Bye To All That'

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## 'Good-Bye To All That'

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Secretary of the Department of Energy (DOE), Steven Chu, announced his resignation in a 3,700-word "Dear Colleague" address. While this is the time usually reserved for valedictory addresses or sentimental remembrances, I, for one, cannot do that. For me, and I'd guess other supporters of biofuels and all those who support balanced leadership of all DOE programs, it is a time of good-bye to all that and a hope that the future will be better.

I was recently at the Washington DC Auto Show/Industry Day where Secretary Chu made his last public appearance before the announcement. It encapsulated all the traits that made a shambles of U.S. biofuel/bioenergy policy, while continuing his elevation of the poor-selling and poor-performing electric car to the pedestal of savior.

To set the stage: Just before Chu's appearance, Nissan Automotive was on the schedule at the show. The topic? Dropping the price of the electric Leaf by \$2,000 to \$3,000 to improve sales. Would that be the marketing strategy of a company with a hot, in-demand product? Nissan sold about 10,000 Leafs in the U.S. last year. The sales goal announced for 2012 was around 20,000. What else could they do but try dropping the price, which still left the Leaf priced considerably above a comparably equipped Nissan Sentra that runs on liquid fuel?

Another interesting fact was reported by the Nissan speaker. 90 percent of all Nissan recharges (which take about three hours) were performed at the home. This was happening despite millions of dollars of public money having been spent on public and place-of-work chargers.

On to Secretary Chu's performance ...

The Secretary was introduced by David Danielson who is the head of the DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). Mr. Danielson stated upfront

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that the task of the DOE was to support President Obama's "all-of-the-above" energy strategy. So what is one of the first things we hear Secretary Chu say?

That the U.S. will reduce our dependence on foreign oil with electric vehicles (EVs), liquefied natural gas (LNG), catalytic hydrothermal gasification (CHG) and hydrogen.

That's right, biofuels are not mentioned. In his speech, they were not part of "all of the above."

Furthermore, he didn't mention the need for the development of every economically possible method to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs), which is the federally mandated goal of the new 54.5-MPG automobile fuel economy standards.

What did he talk about? EVs. How great they will be. How the government needs to spend even more tax dollars on public charging stations so people will buy them. How they will lower consumer electrical costs.

How there will be 1 million of them on the road by his 2015-2016 deadline, even though there are about 50,000 on the road in 2013 and sales are not going well. How they should be marketed as a great way to address his displeasure with getting gasoline on his hands when he pumps fuel. (I wonder how often this happens since he said earlier that he doesn't own a car?)

What happened to "all of the above?" What happened to the importance of how 10 percent ethanol in our fuel reduces oil imports by about 900,000 barrels a day, while also reducing GHGs? And, while you knew you were leaving yesterday, what happened to thanking the people of EERE for all the hard work they are putting into the development of new, even lower GHG biofuels?

For me, good-bye to all that. Good-bye to devoting all your time to only your pet projects. Good-bye to failed lithium-ion batteries (Boeing 787s anyone?). Good-bye to confusing Congressional budget sequestering with carbon sequestration.

I look forward to a new time, a new land, a place where a DOE secretary will provide leadership for the entire portfolio of EERE programs. I look forward to a DOE secretary who knows that only renewable energies, and not natural gas, will get us on a straight path to mitigating climate change and reducing oil imports. I look forward to better and clearer days in this new land.

Good-bye to all that.

*This essay is reprinted with permission from Advanced Biofuels USA, which promotes public understanding, acceptance, and use of advanced biofuels by promoting research, development and improvement of advanced biofuels technologies, production, marketing and delivery; and by promoting the sustainable development, cultivation and processing of advanced biofuels crops, and agricultural and forestry residues and wastes.*

*What's your take? Please feel free to comment below!*

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