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For Immediate Release

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Growing Ethanol and Carbon Markets Strengthen Biden Climate and Jobs Plan. It Will Be A “Rare Earth Day” When the U.S. Isn’t Importing Rare Earths/Metals from China.

WILCOX, NE-April 22, 2021--- “The bipartisan Growing Climate Solutions Act which will set up a structure in USDA to help farmers fight climate change by sequestering carbon and accessing carbon markets is supported by 50 agricultural groups including the National Farmers Union and American Farm Bureau Federation, as it should be,” says Gale Lush, Chairman of the American Corn Growers Foundation (ACGF), a corn, soybean and wheat farmer from Wilcox, NE. “This new legislation is a logical approach by incentivizing farmers to address climate change concerns by storing carbon in the soil. Taken together with no-till farming practices and the increased use of ethanol in gasoline to clean the air these multi-pronged strategies will also create jobs and help mitigate the inevitable environmental concerns inherent with the mining of rare earths needed to power electric vehicles and rare metals such as lithium, which are essential for lithium-ion batteries. If the U.S. is going to create new clean energy industries in our own economy beyond ethanol, we will need to do the extraction mining here rather than importing the rare earths and rare metals and their components from China, Bolivia, Chile or other countries. Storing carbon through modern farming practices while improving the current liquid fuel infrastructure with higher ethanol blends, without needing to replace fuel storage tanks, is a great climate-smart strategy.”

Lush added, “According to an April 10, 2019 U.S. Department of Energy/National Energy Technology Laboratory report, “Rare Earth Markets and Imbedded Demand”, almost all rare earths are currently being imported and the U.S. imported \$2.6 trillion worth of finished products in 2018, including \$306.7 billion in vehicles; \$386.4 billion in machinery including computers; and \$367.1 billion in electrical machinery and equipment. This is obviously a tremendous domestic industry and job creation opportunity if the U.S. is willing to go after it. However, lithium, for example, is not presently being mined in the U.S. due to environmental concerns. Instead, it has been imported from foreign countries. There are huge environmental concerns but if we want to be self-sufficient and create these industries, as part of addressing climate change, we will have to acknowledge the concerns with domestic mining as detailed in an article, “Nevada lithium mine kicks off a new era of Western extraction” which ran in the 2/18/21 edition of *High Country News*. The U.S. has dealt with tradeoffs before and this is not unlike the issues involved with major infrastructure projects such as the interstate highway system, the network of U.S. railroads and the electric grid system that serve the needs of the American society and our economy. If the U.S. is going to be serious about having a major electric vehicle fleet, we have to factor in the tradeoffs. That makes carbon sequestration and higher ethanol blends even more important as environment friendly tools.”

Dan McGuire, ACGF policy director said, “modern farming practices such as no-till planting systems, cover crops, high tech equipment and water-saving irrigation techniques combine to save fuel, reduce soil erosion and help the environment. Effective carbon sequestration incentives such as the proposed Growing Climate Solutions Act can facilitate the continuation and expansion of such practices. Of major complementary significance is the fact that corn ethanol is an environmentally friendly, octane-enhancing, job-creating economic superstar that offers massive benefits for the rural sector and the American economy overall. According to a May 2020 fact sheet from Growth Energy:

- Thanks to ethanol, there are fewer toxic, dirty chemicals in our fuel supply, water and air.
- Biofuels, like ethanol, play a major role in cleaning up our transportation sector and displacing harmful fuel additives, like benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene (BTEX) that can be found in petroleum-based fuels.
- USDA data shows that ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 39 percent or more compared to traditional gasoline, with corn ethanol’s relative carbon benefits reaching as high as 70 percent.
- Research conducted in five global cities by the University of Illinois at Chicago found that E10 ethanol blends cut toxic emissions by 15.2 percent, while E20 blends reduce toxins by 31.7 percent.
- A study done by researchers at the Ford Motor Company found that ethanol blends above 30 percent cut particle emissions by as much as 45 percent.

“A national carbon sequestration and carbon market program administered through the USDA, combined with a 30 percent ethanol blend nationwide, are earth-friendly practices that will create jobs and improve the environment.”