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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Midwest E85 Corridor Initiative Could Spur Major Expansion of E85 in Ohio:**

13 separate Ohio retailers propose nearly 100 possible new E85 retail sites near instates, mainly near urban areas

On Tuesday, June 13, Ohio joined with seven other Midwestern states to request a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) for the “Midwest E-85 Corridor Program.” If awarded in full, the grant would provide up to \$1.55 million, most of which would support new E85 retail sites near interstate highways throughout the Midwest.

Ohio Governor Bob Taft submitted a letter on behalf of Ohio to DOE Secretary Samuel Bodman. In his letter, the Governor said, “I am fully committed to the development of a strong E85 retail network in the Midwest Region.” He added that legislation (HB 245) “that will be signed into law shortly” will provide an additional \$1 million to support biofuels infrastructure. Some of this funding will support biodiesel infrastructure as well.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Illinois Corn Growers initiated the project. Clean Fuels Ohio (CFO) coordinated Ohio’s portion of the proposal with support from the Ohio Office of Energy Efficiency and the Ohio Corn Marketing Program. Ohio and Wisconsin requested \$300,000 in federal funding – the top level sought by any partner state. \$250,000 would help pay for refueling equipment with the rest paying for marketing materials and activities. The State of Ohio and retailers would provide matching funds.

Many Ohio retailers expressed interest in participating in the project. CFO received “letters of interest” from 13 separate retail companies representing nearly 100 sites, all of which would be within two miles of an interstate highway. Most are in outstanding locations within metropolitan areas. Twelve supporting organizations provided letters of support.

“For three of four years, this has been our vision and our hope,” said Sam Spofforth, CFO’s Executive Director. “Now retailers in visible, high traffic locations are expressing serious interest in providing

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E85. We expected this to happen eventually, but the high level of interest coming this soon – and the fact that the locations are so strong – honestly caught us by surprise.”

Earlier in 2006, Governor Taft set a goal of tripling E85 retail sites from 6 to 18 by the end of 2006.

“I’m confident that we’ll meet that goal – and probably exceed it,” said Bill Manz, Manager of Business and Industry, with the Ohio Energy Office within Ohio Department of Development, which has responsibility for administrating the current pilot biofuels retail incentive program. The Energy Office will administer the expanded program to be created when Governor Taft signs HB 245, as expected, in early July.

Spofforth credited the Ohio Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association (OPMCA) for much of the success in identifying interested retailers.

“Without OPMCA’s support, I doubt we’d have identified half this many locations,” said Spofforth. “They contacted their members on our behalf and many of their members – large, small and throughout much of the state – responded.”

The Midwest Corridor proposal focused only on retail sites close to interstates so many parts of the state, such as all of southern and southeastern Ohio, are not included in this proposal. The state and E85 supporters emphasized non-Interstate locations won’t be left out or forgotten. State funds under the existing pilot program and HB 245 could be used for sites anywhere in Ohio.

However, with strong interest and need, it will be a challenge to stretch the limited state and possible federal funds to make E85 available to as many Ohioans as possible. Biofuels supporters noted that funds under the new program also are needed and will be used to support biodiesel retail and bulk blending projects.

“We have our work cut out for us,” said Tadd Nicholson from the Ohio Corn Marketing Program, and a member of the review committee for the current pilot incentive program.

“The pilot program funds plus the \$1 million as part of HB 245 will get us started, but selecting locations and stretching funds will be a real challenge for the state,” added Nicholson. “Clearly, more funding will be needed.”

The DOE is expected to announce grant winners within 90 days.