

But it is not just ethanol. Advanced biofuels reduce greenhouse gas emissions even further. They are required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 percent. That is why groups like the American Lung Association have supported the development and use of biofuels. And while many advanced biofuels are just beginning to come online, others—like biodiesel—are getting closer to really hitting their stride.

An added benefit of growth of biofuels in States like Illinois is the effect it has had on our rural economy. The use of biofuels has helped create an additional market for crops, but it also has created an emerging industry in rural communities. There are now 14 ethanol plants and 5 biodiesel plants operating in Illinois. Steady biofuels production in Illinois means new jobs in communities that were having trouble economically even before the recession. Those 14 ethanol plants have led to 5,400 direct jobs in Illinois and payroll exceeding \$250 million.

EPA issued a draft rule last month that would waive the statutory RFS levels for 2014 below levels even required in 2012. By waiving the standard as proposed, the rule not only threatens the current biofuels industry, but it will significantly slow or stop more advanced biofuels coming to the market. In effect, what EPA has proposed would stop any new growth in the industry.

Today, most gasoline is blended with 10 percent ethanol, more commonly referenced as E-10. Some think of this level as a “blend wall” because to increase the blend ratio, we need more investment in infrastructure like gas pumps that deliver it. But if we get stuck at E-10, that effectively shuts down for many biofuels. Corn-based ethanol already is produced at levels to completely saturate the market at E-10, leaving little room for growth advanced cellulosic ethanol.

Part of the reason for creating the RFS was to help create incentives to push past barriers like the blend wall. EPA has already approved a pathway to doing just that in the form of E-15. But instead of using RFS to help push through infrastructure hurdles to biofuel growth, EPA’s proposal would enshrine this market barrier as the true ceiling for much of our biofuels growth.

And EPA’s proposed rule is already reverberating through the market. Investments in biofuels, particularly advanced biofuels, are already starting to slow, based on the proposed rule. I heard from a company in Illinois that had recently announced new investments in their plant. They are now rethinking their expansion plans. That means if EPA’s proposed waiver is adopted, we may never realize the full benefits of RFS that Congress intended. We will freeze our progress on reducing greenhouse gas emission. We will limit a tool in securing our energy independence. And we will stymie the

growth of an industry that is playing an important role in rural economies.

That is why I am working with like-minded Senators on both sides of the aisle to urge the EPA to reconsider this rule before it is finalized. We have come too far to take this giant step backward. Biofuels are an important part of our energy future and the right path for our country.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL RICHARD D. ROOT

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, our men and women in uniform sacrifice much to keep our Nation strong and free. They are well-trained, extraordinarily capable and are some of our country’s best and brightest. One of them is a man I want to help recognize today as he retires from the U.S. Army.

COL Richard D. Root, from Hartford, MI, has served our country in uniform for a quarter of a century and I am delighted to congratulate him on a long and distinguished military career. In 2007, Colonel Root came to the Senate as the Deputy for the Army’s Senate liaison office. He was then selected as the Director of legislative affairs for GEN John Allen, the commander, International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, during the critical period in Afghanistan from 2011 to 2013. In this capacity, Colonel Root escorted over 70 congressional delegations visiting Afghanistan and Pakistan. During these congressional delegations, Colonel Root masterfully balanced both the interests of Senators with the priorities of his commander to ensure that Members of Congress received a clear and accurate picture of the strategic military and political situation in Afghanistan.

Prior to his service with congressional liaison, Colonel Root performed with great distinction in all of his assignments throughout his extraordinary career, including command of the 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment “Red Knights” during Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2005 to 2006. Additionally, he served as an executive officer for the 4th Infantry Division Artillery and a variety of other tactical and operational assignments from platoon to brigade while deployed for the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and for Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield in 1991.

In his final assignment as the executive officer to the chief of army legislative liaison, Colonel Root worked tirelessly to expand relationships between the Army and the 113th Congress.

Our military personnel do not shoulder the stress and sacrifice of military service alone, and Colonel Root is no exception. His wife, Diann, and his daughter, Lexi, have stood proudly by his side, sacrificing time with their husband and father while he fulfilled his military commitments. To them also, we offer a truly heartfelt thanks.

As he retires, Colonel Root leaves behind an impressive record of military

service and his counsel, professionalism and expertise will surely be missed by the Army and Congress alike. We offer him our sincere thanks for his service to our Nation and the example he has set for those under his command and colleagues with whom he served. I know my colleagues join me in wishing Colonel Root and his family all the best as they begin this next exciting chapter in their lives.

ITALIAN HALL TRAGEDY IN CALUMET, MICHIGAN

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, a century ago on December 24, 1913, hundreds of miners and their families had gathered for a Christmas Eve celebration in the small Upper Peninsula town of Calumet, MI. Their community was under tremendous stress; the miners of what is known to this day as “Copper Country” had been on strike for 5 months. But they had come for a brief holiday respite from the trials and struggles of those difficult days.

What began as a joyful day ended in tears and wails and inconsolable grief. While no one will know for certain what sparked the families’ rush to the doors at the bottom of the stairs leading from the hall, most believe that someone yelled “Fire!” even though there was none. What resulted in the rush to the exit is almost unimaginable: 59 children and 14 adults were dead, having been trampled or suffocated.

This dreadful disaster has forever brought back painful memories on December 24, Christmas Eve, for the community of Calumet, MI. On the centennial anniversary of this event, the anguish is still real. The sadness is only overshadowed by the senselessness of the event.

The families celebrating in the Italian Hall were hard-working immigrants, struggling through the labor strike to fight for better wages, hours and working conditions. They came to Copper country for the promise of work, even though mining was difficult and dangerous. This area was home to the largest known deposits of pure elemental copper in the world, drawing hundreds of thousands of people from around the world. It was here that the lives of immigrants shaped our nation, with their successes and their struggles.

So many reminders of the copper mining heyday remain in the quaint town. From the historic architecture to the Yooper accents; from the variety of ethnic foods to the hard living work ethic that exists today, the Copper Country communities are reminded every day of their heritage. The historic buildings, landscapes and museum collections of the area are protected and preserved by the Keweenaw National Historical Park, working collaboratively with local and State governments, historic organizations and private property owners. The park brings to life the multi-faceted story of