

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Remarks During a Breakout Session at the White House Rural Economic Forum in Peosta, Iowa

August 16, 2011

The President. John, sorry to interrupt.

Participant. No. No problem.

The President. You were making a good point. Good to see you. Everybody, please have a seat. I just wanted to jump in. I just came out of a Small Business Breakout Session. So I don't want to interrupt. I just want to emphasize, first of all, I think Vilsack is doing a great job.

Second of all, this issue of energy innovation I think is absolutely vital for rural communities, but for the entire country. If we can harness homegrown fuels—whether it's biofuels, wind, solar, geothermal, you name it—then I think it can generate hundreds of thousands of jobs all across the country. It can help free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil. It diversifies sources of income for farmers. I'm not telling you guys anything that you don't already know.

All I want to emphasize is, is that when you look at farm economies, right now obviously prices are good, but given the volatility of the world market, for us to be able to figure out how we can also use energy and conservation as an enhancement to the core business of feeding people, then I think that we can make enormous progress. And Tom has a lot of creative ideas. Our Department of Energy, we've made this one of our highest priorities. And so I'm very interested in figuring out how the Federal Government can be even more helpful than it already is in moving this agenda forward.

So, with that, let me just sit back and listen and—unless somebody has a question for me, then I'll try to answer it.

[At this point, the discussion continued, and no transcript was provided.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:09 p.m. at Northeast Iowa Community College.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : White House Rural Economic Forum in Peosta, IA.

Locations: Peosta, IA.

Names: Vilsack, Thomas J.

Subjects: Agriculture : Food markets and prices; Agriculture, Department of : Secretary; Commerce, international : Global financial markets :: Unrest; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies :: Promotion efforts; Energy : Biofuels and ethanol; Energy : Domestic sources; Energy : Foreign sources; Energy : Solar and wind energy; Iowa : President's visit; White House Office : White House Rural Economic Forum.

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