

**Statement of
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U.S. House Committee on Agriculture

“Increasing Demand and Opportunities for Homegrown Products Here and Abroad.”

September 16, 2026

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Craig, and Members of the House Agriculture Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on "Increasing Demand and Opportunities for Homegrown Products Domestically and Abroad." I am honored to appear before you for the first time as Chairman of the Board of the Plant Based Products Council, representing companies and organizations across the agricultural biomanufacturing value chain. In addition, I serve as the Director of Industrial Innovation at the Iowa Corn Growers Association, where I direct research and business development projects on behalf of Iowa's corn farmers, covering new plant-based polymers, platform chemicals, biofuels, and fermentation-derived products. This work focuses on translating advances in chemistry and biotechnology into commercially viable markets that create additional demand for agricultural products.

The Plant Based Products Council (PBPC) represents businesses, large and small, that contribute to the plant-based products supply chain—farmers, feedstock processors, manufacturers, and companies that use plant-based products. As a feedstock-agnostic organization, we support policy that drives demand for a range of crop inputs, such as algae, bamboo, corn, hemp, mushrooms, potatoes, rice husks, soy, sugar, agricultural residues, and non-edible biomass like grasses, shrubs, and trees that can be used to make plant-based products ranging from furniture to cleaning supplies and plastic to textiles. PBPC is dedicated to expanding consumer-driven markets for plant-based products and advancing the adoption of renewable plant-based materials for uses beyond food and fuel. The organization's policy priorities focus on building a robust domestic biomanufacturing sector that is globally competitive.

America's farmers are uniquely positioned to supply the feedstocks that power a growing ag bioeconomy. The next generation of agricultural prosperity will not come only from growing crops. It will also come from transforming those crops into higher-value products that create jobs, strengthen domestic manufacturing, increase our strength in trade, and open new markets for farmers.

Traditional agricultural markets remain essential to our nation's food, feed, and fuel systems. At the same time, farmers need additional demand opportunities that can complement existing markets and provide greater stability over time. Agricultural biomanufacturing offers an important path toward that goal by converting feedstocks into a wide range of products, including renewable chemicals, sustainable materials, bioplastics, consumer products, industrial products, and emerging next-generation technologies.

Some of these products include: consumer products made from soybean oil, such as power tool lubricants, asphalt shingle rejuvenators, and propylene glycol used as an aircraft deicer; chemical products traditionally made from petroleum that can instead be produced from corn-derived glucose, such as acrylic acid for adhesives, fatty alcohols for cosmetics, soaps and shampoos, thermoplastic polyurethane foams for shoes and other cushioned products, and monoethylene glycol for polyester clothing and plastic beverage bottles; and products derived from ethanol as a platform chemical, including acetic acid for paints and dishwasher and laundry pods, polypropylene, the world's second-most-produced plastic, used in lightweight packaging, medical devices, and automotive components, and ethylene, the world's most-produced chemical, used to manufacture construction materials, textiles, clothing, and lightweight packaging. These innovations build upon the plant-based, compostable polymers already found in products used regularly in the Congressional office buildings, namely polylactic acid (PLA) and polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA).

Beyond their ability to offer strong markets for American producers, plant-based products are reliable alternatives to many of the current fossil fuel-based products on the market today. As a Ph.D. chemist, but more importantly as a husband and father, I trust plant-based products and use them every day in my own home.

PBPC launched its annual consumer research program in 2020 to better understand how Americans view plant-based products and the broader transition to renewable materials. Each year, the research reveals a consistent trend—Americans overwhelmingly support plant-based products.

Consumer familiarity with plant-based products has grown significantly since PBPC began tracking the issue. In 2025, 71% of Americans said they were familiar with plant-based products, reflecting a multi-year increase and signaling that plant-based materials have firmly entered the mainstream.

Americans also view these products very positively: 85% report favorable opinions, 68% use them at least monthly, and 86% are likely to purchase or use one in the next three months. This strong and growing interest shows that plant-based products are no longer a hypothetical market. Consumers are increasingly seeing these products as everyday options.

PBPC's research also shows consumers support Federal policy that would support growing plant-based product manufacturing in the U.S. More than 72% of consumers say they support Federal laws, including tax breaks, that would incentivize the buildout of the American ag bioeconomy.

These products create new customers for America's farmers. As demand for biobased products grows, so does demand for the corn, soybeans, wheat, and other crops used to produce them. This creates an opportunity to connect agricultural production more directly with value-added manufacturing.

Expanding agricultural biomanufacturing can also generate significant benefits for rural America. Manufacturing facilities located closer to feedstock production can help retain more economic value in rural communities. They can support rural economic development, create higher-paying jobs, and strengthen local supply chains. New markets can also help farmers and rural communities become more resilient in the face of commodity price volatility.

Every new biobased product represents a new customer for America's farmers. By supporting the bioeconomy, Congress can help ensure that agricultural production remains connected to a diverse and growing range of markets in the U.S.

The *Biomanufacturing and Jobs Act* would strengthen the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) support for biobased products and help modernize Federal policies that support market growth, and we appreciate Chairman Thompson's leadership to include provisions of this legislation in the House-passed Farm Bill. This bipartisan legislation recognizes that Federal policy can play an important role in building demand, improving market information, and supporting the development of a competitive domestic biomanufacturing sector.

Among its provisions, the legislation would modernize USDA's BioPreferred Program and improve Federal procurement opportunities for biobased products. Federal purchasing power can help establish markets for products manufactured from renewable agricultural resources by providing tangible market signals entrepreneurs need to cross the "valley of death" in commercialization. By improving awareness and access to these products, the Federal government can help accelerate adoption across the broader economy.

The legislation would also enhance data collection and market visibility and establish more consistent terminology for biobased products. Clear definitions and reliable data are essential for policymakers, producers, manufacturers, investors, and consumers. Better information will help stakeholders understand the size and scope of the industry, identify opportunities for growth, and evaluate the effectiveness of Federal programs.

In addition, stronger coordination among Federal agencies would help align programs that support biomanufacturing. Agriculture, manufacturing, economic development, procurement, and research policies all affect the bioeconomy. A coordinated Federal approach can reduce unnecessary barriers and help innovative companies move more efficiently from concept to commercialization.

Many elements of this bipartisan bill were included in the House-passed Farm Bill earlier this year. And we are encouraged by the improvements; Congress should act because this legislation would create additional demand for agricultural commodities, support domestic manufacturing, and help ensure continued American leadership in a rapidly growing global industry. It would also strengthen the competitiveness of U.S. companies as other nations, like China, make strategic investments in biomanufacturing.

Another policy priority is the creation of dedicated North American Industry Classification System, or NAICS, codes for bioproduct manufacturing. Currently, biobased manufacturers are distributed across multiple industrial classifications. This fragmentation makes it difficult to identify the industry accurately in Federal economic data. In fact, some bioeconomy products are nested with their petroleum counterparts such as when the same product can come from both plant-based and petrochemical feedstocks.

When an industry is not clearly classified, policymakers cannot fully measure its growth, investors lack important market information, and communities may not receive an accurate picture of the jobs and economic activity generated by biomanufacturing. Inconsistent classification can also make it more difficult to evaluate Federal programs and identify areas where additional support is needed.

In the past, Congress has supported the creation of dedicated bioproduct manufacturing NAICS codes and encouraged collaboration between USDA and the Department of Commerce on bioeconomy classifications by stipulating it in the 2018 Farm Bill. The ongoing 2027 NAICS revisions provide an opportunity to improve the existing classification framework to improve the Federal measurement of economic activity, investment, production, and job growth associated with biobased manufacturing. When the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published the Economic Classification Policy Committee's recommended NAICS revisions in July, the proposal did not reflect Congress's direction. We respectfully urge the Committee to reaffirm that direction to OMB and USDA before the 2027 revisions are finalized, ensuring the bioeconomy is measured in a way that reflects the significant growth of the industry.

If we cannot measure the American ag bioeconomy, we cannot fully support its growth. Reliable data will give farmers, manufacturers, policymakers, and investors a clearer understanding of the sector's contribution to the American economy.

Innovation alone is not enough to build a successful biomanufacturing industry. Companies also need access to pilot, demonstration, and commercial-scale facilities. Moving from research and development to full-scale production requires substantial capital, technical expertise, and infrastructure. Today, the United States lacks sufficient scale-up infrastructure to help all innovators make that transition domestically.

Improved financing tools are needed to reduce commercialization risk. Demonstration and first-of-a-kind facilities can face uncertainty that makes private financing difficult, even when the underlying technology has significant potential. Federal support can help bridge that gap, attract private capital, and encourage the development of domestic production capacity. These investments would benefit both manufacturers and farmers. When companies build and operate facilities in the United States, they create demand for domestic feedstocks and support jobs throughout the agricultural and manufacturing supply chains.

USDA's Biorefinery, Renewable Chemical, and Biobased Product Manufacturing Assistance Program under Section 9003 has demonstrated value in supporting the development of biobased manufacturing capacity. However, the program should be expanded and strengthened so that more promising technologies can reach commercial production. The program should also restore and strengthen support for demonstration-scale projects, where companies often face a significant gap between laboratory success and commercial viability.

The bipartisan *Agricultural Biorefinery Innovation and Opportunity (Ag BIO) Act* would greatly strengthen and improve USDA's Section 9003 program. We are again appreciative of Chairman Thompson's leadership on this issue and glad to see many of those provisions included in the House-passed Farm Bill language. Simply put—we cannot win the global race for biomanufacturing if American innovations must leave the United States to scale. A strong Section 9003 program can help ensure that research conducted here leads to facilities, jobs, and markets here.

Global competition in biomanufacturing is intensifying. Competitor nations, like China, are making strategic investments in infrastructure and funding incentives designed to attract manufacturing facilities and private capital. The national security implications of this global activity were highlighted in the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology (NSCEB) report published in 2025. In its April 2025 final report, the NSCEB noted that “China is quickly ascending to biotechnology dominance, having made biotechnology a strategic priority for 20 years. To remain competitive, the United States must take swift action.”

A strong American ag bioeconomy also needs robust Federal investment in the technologies that will drive future demand for farmers and meet the needs of consumers. The inclusion of biobased products as part of the Secretary of Agriculture's strategic research and development priorities highlights the importance of the growing industry. Existing efforts through USDA's Agricultural Research Service, including the NP 306 initiative for Product Quality and New Uses, offer valuable opportunities to complement private sector innovation to build value-added markets for American grown feedstocks. But these programs need robust funding and strong support to help them reach their full potential.

The United States has world-class farmers, abundant agricultural feedstocks, and outstanding research and innovation. However, we need stronger incentives to ensure that those advantages translate into domestic biomanufacturing investment.

A targeted biomanufacturing production and investment tax incentive could encourage the construction of domestic production facilities and drive private capital investment. It could also create rural jobs, expand demand for agricultural feedstocks, strengthen supply chains, and improve national competitiveness.

The bipartisan *Biobased Materials Investment and Production Act* would offer tax incentives to expand production capacity for plant-based products in the U.S. The incentives would include \$0.10 per pound of qualified renewable products produced in a given year or a 30% investment tax credit to offset new construction and retrofitting costs

for manufacturing facilities. Recently, a broad array of more than 100 companies, organizations, producer groups, and other stakeholders urged Congress to support the legislation. Such an incentive would help convert American-grown crops into value-added products manufactured in the United States. It would support the development of facilities that connect farmers with new markets and help retain more of the economic benefits of biomanufacturing within the country.

Congress should support incentives that encourage companies to build and operate biomanufacturing facilities domestically. We need to develop the infrastructure to turn American-grown crops into more American-made bioproducts—not export the jobs and investment opportunities that come with this growing industry to competitors around the globe. Let’s export valuable plant-based materials, not jobs and technology.

Agriculture is no longer solely about food, feed, and fuel. The agriculture bioeconomy represents a new pillar of growth. It offers an opportunity to expand markets for farmers, create jobs in rural communities, strengthen domestic manufacturing, improve global competitiveness, and enhance national security through a stronger domestic biomanufacturing base.

Congress has an opportunity to advance policies that turn America’s agricultural strengths into long-term economic opportunity. The *Biomanufacturing and Jobs Act*, dedicated bioproducts NAICS codes, the *Ag BIO Act*, investment in research, and targeted biomanufacturing tax incentives are some of the policy improvements that contribute to a more competitive and resilient U.S. bioeconomy.

On behalf of the Plant Based Products Council, thank you for holding this important hearing on new markets and the opportunities they create for American agriculture. We look forward to working with the Committee to advance policies that strengthen the bioeconomy, expand opportunities for farmers and rural communities, and support a more competitive domestic biomanufacturing base.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to answer any questions.