

I'm writing in response to the article, "**Not In My Back Yard; Some county residents concerned at having an ethanol plant nearby**" by Craig Spychalla in the April 12th edition of the paper.

The article reviews the controversy here in Cambria which began with Didion Milling's announcement of their intent to build an ethanol plant. I would add that many concerns expressed by citizens and elected village officials were left unanswered.

Many of us opposed to issuing the permits became convinced that Didion Milling wasn't doing the planning necessary to safely operate a plant here in the village. Didion Milling would offer only assurances that our concerns would be addressed after we gave them the required permits. It was a 'Catch 22' which most residents of Cambria wisely chose to reject by passing an advisory referendum against Didion's proposal.

To those who still feel the need to assign blame for this rejection, I would point to Didion Milling's own failures in their dealings with the village of Cambria.

Regarding the United Wisconsin Grain Producers' plant near Friesland, although it may well be true that their plant faced little opposition, it is certainly true that the township they chose to locate in is quite unique. Randolph Township alone of all the townships in Columbia County has no zoning law. None. Because of this quirk and unlike Cambria, there is no effective forum available in which local people may express their concerns.

It is disingenuous of Kevin Roche to equate air quality with odor, as he appears to do in the article. Only a small percentage of total emissions are detectable by odor. UWGP's own state-issued preliminary operating permit allows the plant to emit up to:

- 88.55 tons per year of Volatile Organic Chemicals
- 55.86 tons per year of Particulate Matter
- 10.11 tons per year of Formaldehyde
- 134 pounds per year of Acrolein
- 92.62 tons per year of Nitrogen Oxides
- 100.23 tons per year of Carbon Monoxide

As can be seen from the above figures, while ethanol proponents may claim reduced tailpipe emissions of carbon monoxide, the carbon monoxide emissions are merely shifted to the area where the ethanol is produced.

The plant will also emit a considerable quantity of nitrogen oxides and some studies have concluded that ethanol blended gasoline actually increases tailpipe emissions of nitrogen oxides.

Although proponents consistently state that using ethanol will lower the price at the pump, in practice ethanol blended fuels are higher priced than regular gasoline due to additional blending costs. To top it off, ethanol blends yield the consumer fewer miles per gallon.

I'm sorry that our Representative Hahn is dumbfounded by people's opposition to ethanol plants. He doesn't seem to understand that people confronted with the prospect of an ethanol plant as a neighbor or people facing ethanol mandates at the state level, quite accurately perceive that they are getting the shaft while a handful get all the benefits.

And yes Representative Hahn, I do understand that as a country we spend vast sums of money securing supplies of oil overseas. I would argue that this is result of the failure of present and past administrations' energy and foreign policies and not a result of our dependence on foreign oil.

Even if we decide to grow corn and soybeans on every possible acre of arable land in the United States, ethanol and other biofuels can never replace more than a drop in a barrel of the oil we consume in our country every day. That's the reality.

John Mueller

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