US Navy defends renewable fuels strategy in Industrial Biotechnology Journal

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Despite criticism from Congressional Republicans and other groups, the U.S. Navy recently completed its Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2012 international maritime exercises, featuring the "Great Green Fleet" powered by a 50 percent biofuels blend. The Navy contends that renewable energy resources such as biofuels have a critical role to play in enhancing national security and energy independence. Tom Hicks, U.S. Navy Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy, responded to recent attacks on the military's biofuels strategy and clearly presented the Navy's position going forward in an interview published in Industrial Biotechnology, a peer-reviewed journal from Mary Ann Liebert, Inc [1]. . The article is available free online at the Industrial Biotechnology website [2].

In the interview "A Dialogue with Thomas Hicks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy [3]," Mr. Hicks identified areas of consensus and ongoing challenges that emerged from a recent Industry Roundtable on the Advanced Drop-in Biofuels Initiative organized by the Navy that brought together the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Departments of Energy and Transportation, the Air Force, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He also responded to questions about the Navy's strategy of using market pull to drive technological innovation and commercial development of high-performance biofuels. Mr. Hicks comments on the potential effects of recent actions by the Senate Armed Services Committee to restrict the use of Department of Defense funds for biofuels procurement.

"We applaud the U.S. Navy's commitment to developing our domestic renewable energy platform to help secure the country's energy future," says Larry Walker, PhD, Co-Editor-in-Chief and Professor, Biological & Environmental Engineering, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. "Efforts like those being proposed by the U.S. Navy will help catalyze biotechnology developments that are so critical for our nation to compete successfully in the expanding global market."

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