



Speech by

Lawrence Springborg

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Hansard Thursday, 19 August 2004

LIQUID FUEL SUPPLY AMENDMENT BILL

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.30 a.m.): I move—
That the bill be now read a second time.

Today I am introducing a bill to require that all petrol sold in Queensland contain up to 10 per cent ethanol. This legislation will ensure that Queensland becomes the ethanol production capital of Australia by giving financiers, investors and farmers the confidence to invest in ethanol production.

Given the hour of the day, I seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Ethanol is a renewable fuel that can be produced from crops like sugar cane, sorghum and corn. It is being widely used around the world in places like Europe, the USA and Brazil to blend with conventional petrol.

Ethanol has many benefits. It will reduce greenhouse gas and toxic emissions, it will improve the air quality in our cities, and it will stimulate the development of an exciting new industry in rural and regional areas throughout Queensland. Quite simply, a viable ethanol industry in Queensland will create jobs.

The Nationals are absolutely committed to unlocking the benefits that ethanol can deliver to Queensland. We are committed to taking E10, which is petrol with a 10% ethanol blend, from a niche product to the mainstream fuel used in Queensland. We are committed to doing something meaningful not theatrical to ensure this industry gets off the ground.

Unfortunately, the Labor Party would not back The Nationals in 2002 when we last attempted to introduce a state ethanol mandate and they have continued to oppose the development of an ethanol industry in Queensland via a state mandate.

Despite the Premier's excuses about legal technicalities, sugar industry experts and even the RACQ have said there are no legal barriers to introducing a State ethanol mandate.

And experience overseas has shown that an ethanol industry will only happen when a government has the vision and commitment to get behind it and make it happen by introducing a mandate.

There is no debate any more about the benefits of ethanol in the United States. In the US Renewable Fuels Association's Ethanol Industry Outlook 2004, the Secretary of Energy Spencer Graham reveals that in the last three years, 21 new ethanol plants have begun production and the entire industry has added more than one billion gallons of annual production capacity.

The arguments peddled against it, the same old arguments that have been peddled in Queensland in recent years—that it is more expensive, that it is less efficient, that it is damaging to engines—have been totally and completely discredited. Ethanol has been embraced in the USA, in Europe and in Brazil, and with this Bill I hope that this State Parliament will embrace the use of ethanol in Queensland too.

Painted buses travelling up and down the Queensland coast and stickers on government cars won't ensure that an ethanol industry develops in Queensland, but a state ethanol mandate will. This is about being responsible not shifting responsibility. This is about doing something meaningful not theatrical. I hope that all Members will put politics aside and do what is good for Queensland by supporting this bill.