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MEDIA RELEASE

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Windsor Calls For National Party To Support Democrat's Senate Initiatives

The Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor, has welcomed the Democrat's attempt to break the Senate deadlock over the Energy Grants (Cleaner Fuels) Scheme Bill 2003 as the last means of winning a \$120 million ethanol plant investment for Gunnedah along with the associated jobs and expenditure on grain products.

Mr Windsor said, "The extension of the Natural Gas pipeline from Dubbo through the Gwydir and New England Electorates depends on usage by the proposed ethanol plants and the extension may be placed at risk if the Democrats are not successful."

"I cannot understand why John Anderson insists that the Bill should pass the Senate unamended when he knows the Ethanol industry has clearly stated to him that in the Bill's current form they will abandon the investment."

"I am heartened that the Democrats, minor parties and Independents in the Senate are supporting the investment needs of the ethanol plant proponents."

"The message to this government has never varied, the excise free phase needs to start with the commencement of production and not be fixed at a 2003 start date, and to then extend for at least seven years with a five year ramping down."

"The current Government stance means that one supplier with 95% of the market will gain the major benefit from the grants scheme, due to that supplier already being in production, they will see the full five years benefit (2003/2008)."

"Other investors who may come on line over the next several years will have a smaller window, commencement 2005 / finish 2008, three years benefit, commencement 2006 / finish 2008, two years benefit."

Mr Windsor said, "Let me spell out the Democrat's Senate proposal once and for all to the Transport and Regional Services Portfolio, abandon the fixed start point of 2003 (with a one off five year window) and instead commence the benefit as each investment starts production and allow seven years excise exemption with a five year ramp down, (on average a ten year exemption)."

"The Democrats' understand the investors needs, the Government needs to listen and amend this bill or see the loss of huge investment in the Gwydir Electorate and throughout regional Australia."

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