The POTUS His SOTUS, Part 1

By JIM LANE, Editor, *Biofuels Digest*

The President's State of the Union speech.

What was new? (Not much). What was feasible amongst DC gridlock? (Not much)

What about energy? (moreofthesame) Where was the Farm Bill? (AWOL).

In case you were watching wrestling, President Obama gave the State of the Union speech on Tuesday.

Big vision, small vision — practical, impractical — partisan, bipartisan. Cable news chattered away all night on those topics — but the speech had the feeling of a long retweet.

Amongst the Twitterati, he's the POTUS, giving the SOTUS, and in a Twitterverse dominated by 140-character thinking, the SOTUS is, these days, suffering from a case of TL; DR — Too Long, Didn't Read. And the tweets focus, instead, on Michelle Obama's bangs-embracing hairstyle.

The SOTUS contained 18 references to energy — more than enough for the *Digest* to take a close look at what was said, what was not — and the likelihood of all (or any) of the President's energy agenda finding its way into the law books or the departmental budgets.

The "You knew it wasn't a compelling response, when…" Award.

This year's formal Republican response featured Florida Senator Marco Rubio — and I kid you not that the Associated Press, in its coverage, highlighted a manufactured controversy [1] over the way that Rubio paused to take a drink of water.

Most Premature Response Award

Why wait for a chance for rebuttal when you can go for a “Pre-buttal”? The Institute for Energy Research sent around a pre-buttal “reading list to address claims the President may make.” Priceless.

18 references to energy – is that a lot? The Soundbite Scorecard

Here’s the State of the Union “mentions of energy” scorecard, dating back to President Bush’s “Addicted to oil” speech in 2006.

Obama era

2013: 18 energy mentions, 0 biofuels
2012: 23 energy mentions, 0 biofuels, 1 for “alternative transport fuels”
2011 10 energy mentions, 1 biofuels
2010 15 energy mentions, 1 biofuels
2009 14 energy mentions, 1 biofuels

Bush era

2008 5 energy mentions, 0 biofuels
2007 3 energy mentions, 1 biodiesel 1 ethanol
2006 8 energy mentions, 2 ethanol (the “Addicted to Oil” speech)

The Policy That Dare Not Speak its Name

If you guessed “biofuels,” you get another spin.

In fact, it was “Farm.” Not one mention in the State of the Union. No farm bill, no farmers, no farm exports, no farm jobs. Pretty rough go for a sector that is desperately in need of a renewed Farm Bill — and for one of the most vibrant export sectors of the economy.

What Exactly did the President say about Energy?

After years of talking about it, we are finally poised to control our own energy future. We produce more oil at home than we have in 15 years. We have doubled the distance our cars will go on a gallon of gas, and the amount of renewable energy we generate from sources like wind and solar — with tens of thousands of good, American jobs to show for it. We produce more natural gas than ever before — and nearly everyone’s energy bill is lower because of it. And over the last four years, our emissions of the dangerous carbon pollution that threatens our planet have actually fallen.

But for the sake of our children and our future, we must do more to combat climate change. Yes, it’s true that no single event makes a trend. But the fact is, the 12 hottest years on record have all come in the last 15. Heat waves, droughts, wildfires, and floods — all are now more frequent and intense. We can choose to

believe that Superstorm Sandy, and the most severe drought in decades, and the worst wildfires some states have ever seen were all just a freak coincidence. Or we can choose to believe in the overwhelming judgment of science — and act before it's too late.

The good news is, we can make meaningful progress on this issue while driving strong economic growth. I urge this Congress to pursue a bipartisan, market-based solution to climate change, like the one John McCain and Joe Lieberman worked on together a few years ago. But if Congress won't act soon to protect future generations, I will. I will direct my Cabinet to come up with executive actions we can take, now and in the future, to reduce pollution, prepare our communities for the consequences of climate change, and speed the transition to more sustainable sources of energy.

Please tune into the Chemical Equipment Daily for part two of this two-part piece.

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