Chevron Invests $33 M Into Biofuels Research

Chevron has allocated up to $33 million over the next five years to the University of California to pursue advanced technology aimed at converting cellulosic biomass, such as rice straw, into transportation fuels.

The objective of the research project is to develop commercially viable processes for the production of transportation fuels from renewable resources such as new energy crops, forest and agricultural residues and municipal solid waste, according to Chevron's Chief Technology Officer, Don Paul.

"The collaboration calls for research in biochemical and thermochemical conversion, as well as a demonstration facility to test the commercial readiness of these technologies", he said.

"We think it's important to pursue research that could accelerate the use of biofuels since we believe they may play an integral role in diversifying the world's energy sources. Developing next-generation processing technology will help broaden the choice of feedstocks, including cellulosic materials."

The collaboration is expected to focus its research on four areas:

- Understanding the characteristics of current Californian biofuel feedstocks;
- Developing additional feedstocks optimised for features such as drought tolerance, minimal land requirements and harvesting technology;
- Production of cellulosic biofuels;
- Design and construction of a demonstration facility for biochemical and thermochemical production processes.

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"Chevron is investing across the energy spectrum to explore development of energy sources for future generations by expanding the capabilities of today's alternative and renewable energy technologies", Paul said. "Since 2000, Chevron Corporation, through its various subsidiaries, has spent almost $2 billion on renewable energy projects and on delivering energy efficiency solutions."

He said focus areas include geothermal, hydrogen, biofuels and advanced batteries as well as wind and solar technologies. Chevron is the largest renewable energy producer among global oil and gas companies, producing 1,152 MW of renewable energy, primarily from geothermal operations in Indonesia and the Philippines. ■

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