

Advanced Biofuels USA, a nonprofit educational organization, advocates for the adoption of advanced biofuels as an energy security, economic development, military flexibility and climate change solution.



Advanced Biofuels USA response to Baltimore Sun's Dan Rodrick's column: [Should the Grand Prix be a symbol of Baltimore?](#)

Klaus Philipsen, quoted in Dan Rodrick's recent column about the Grand Prix of Baltimore, dislikes what the Grand Prix does, objects to its "heavy-metal aesthetics" and concludes that "racing big, stinky and noisy cars" does nothing to move the identity of Baltimore closer to one of a "biotech and knowledge" industry. "Baltimore, he says, could be the 'greener and cleaner city,' with progressive efforts toward sustainability, green energy,...."

Philipsen should love the Grand Prix because it showcases those qualities—and should promote expanding these races to showcase biotech, green energy and urban industrial revitalization in Baltimore.

First, heavy-metal? Maybe he's thinking of NASCAR. Certainly not the aluminum and carbon fiber renewable E85 fueled rockets known as today's IndyCars. Beside using advanced technology structures, IndyCars use prototype small displacement, turbocharged direct injection engines that are the keystones to meeting new EPA fuel economy standards of 54.5mpg.

Big, stinky, noisy? Well, I'll give him "noisy" but big and stinky he has to take back, along with the assumption that there's no biotech or knowledge embodied in these races.

The American Le Mans Series brands itself as the "leader in green racing." And, it really is. With all the GT class cars (like Corvettes, Ferraris, BMW's, Porsche, Vipers) running on E85 (85% renewable, home-grown, non-polluting fuel) and the Dyson #16 Prototype 1 using renewable isobutanol, "stinky" has no place in the conversation. ALMS was the first, perhaps only, race series to use all cellulosic ethanol in all ethanol blends used in the ALMS races which took significant biotech research effort. E85 also powers the IndyCars.

“Sustainable, greener, cleaner” and “green energy”-- yes.

Because both IndyCar and ALMS strive to use racing as a test bed for innovations that will benefit production vehicles, aerodynamic design, powertrain engineering and fuel efficiency are essential elements of these racing series. In fact, the Michelin Green X Challenge™, a race within the ALMS races, rewards the cleanest, fastest, most efficient cars on the track.

Let's take Philippen's ideas and incorporate them in future Baltimore Grand Prix races. To emphasize sustainability, we should have a Maryland Green Challenge with the cars powered with biofuels made in Maryland. This could include switchgrass that is being grown on the Eastern Shore converted into biofuels with technologies developed by Maryland companies such as Atlantic Biomass Conversions working with Hood College in Frederick, MD, or or with waste-to-fuel technologies developed by Maryland company Fiberight which has built test facilities in Virginia and is working on a commercial facility in Iowa.

And going further to achieve Philippen's dream, Baltimore should consider converting Sparrow's Point into a renewable fuels, biotech, renewable energy R&D center with the roads configured for the Grand Prix. This will not only move the disruption away from downtown but will provide economic benefits for that often neglected part of Baltimore.

Let's build on the foundation that Race On and Andretti Racing have nurtured to make Baltimore the leader for a sustainable, renewable future in energy and transportation celebrated via the extreme test bed of racing.

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