RICHLAND PARISH

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

March 26, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. Washington, DC 20250

Subject: Strong Support for the Biofuel Development Opportunity (BDO) Zone Initiative

Dear Secretary Rollins,

I am writing on behalf of the Richland Parish Chamber of Commerce to express our unequivocal support for the Biofuel Development Opportunity (BDO) Zone Initiative, a transformative program that represents a critical pathway to revitalizing rural economies, generating sustainable job opportunities, and advancing American energy independence.

Our community underwent the BDO Zone rating process in March 2024, and now our prospects to land major economic development projects have dramatically increased as a result of the new rating. This gives Richland Parish the opportunity to compete for billions of dollars of investment in the near future.

The BDO Zone criteria have proven to be an invaluable screening mechanism for developers. Our experience demonstrates that the rating process provides a transparent, rigorous framework that signals a community's readiness for innovative biofuel and agricultural development projects.

We strongly urge the USDA to continue prioritizing and expanding the BDO Zone Initiative. By unlocking frozen funds and providing a clear pathway for community development, this program serves as a critical mechanism for rural economic revitalization, domestic energy production, and climate-smart agricultural innovation.

Sincerely,

Scott Franklin
Director, Richland Parish Chamber