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EPA Approves RFS Pathway Approval For Oberon Fuels

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The U.S. EPA on Feb. 24 approved a Renewable Fuel Standard fuel pathway for Oberon Fuels Inc. that will allow the company to generate D3 cellulosic biofuel or D5 advanced biofuel renewable identification numbers (RINs) for the production of dimethyl ether (DME), a renewable diesel substitute, from waste-derived biogas at its facility in Gonzales County, Texas.

According to documents published by the EPA, Oberon's biogas-to-DME facility in Texas is collocated with an onsite anaerobic poultry manure digester. The facility uses treated biogas from the onsite digester or pipeline renewable natural gas (RNG) sourced from offsite for all feedstocks and thermal process energy. Electricity used at the site is generated onsite from renewable resources or purchased from the grid.

The facility produces DME using a three-step process that includes syngas production via steam methane reforming; methanol synthesis via a catalyzed adiabatic equilibrium limited reaction; and simultaneous DME synthesis and separation via reactive distillation. DME produced at the facility can be used to fuel forklifts, trucks and other vehicles that can run on a blend of propane and DME.

According to the pathway approval document, DME produced at the Oberon facility achieves a 56-61% greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction when compared to the statutory diesel baseline.

A full copy of the pathway approval document is available on the EPA website.