

\$70 mil. grant for biofuels plant near Reno

By AP

SPARKS – A California-based biofuel company building a plant east of Reno has been awarded a \$70 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to help speed delivery of its high-tech process that converts household garbage into jet fuel.

Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., said the grant announced Friday is in addition to a \$105 million loan guarantee U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack confirmed Sept. 4 for Fulcrum Sierra BioFuels.

Company CEO E. James Macias said construction will begin by the end of the year at the same Tahoe-Reno Industrial Park where Tesla Motors has broken ground for its Gigafactory to manufacture electric car batteries just south of Interstate 80 about 15 miles east of Sparks.

The biofuels plant is expected to produce more than 10 million gallons per year of advanced biofuels while diverting over 200,000 tons of garbage from landfills by 2016. Biofuels contain energy, or biomass, that is produced through plants and related material.

Macias said the new fuel is domestic, renewable and competitively priced. He said Sierra BioFuels will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 80 percent compared to traditional petroleum.

The Nevada plant will be the first of more than a dozen that the Pleasanton, Calif.-based Fulcrum has under development throughout North America that will produce hundreds of millions of gallons of advanced biofuels annually, Macias said.

"We are very pleased to be part of this very important Department of Defense program," Macias said in a statement Friday.

Reid said the project will create hundreds of engineering, construction and operation jobs in Nevada.

"Clean energy must be a component of our national security strategy and this investment in Nevada will help to reduce our nation's dependence on foreign sources of energy," the Senate majority leader said. "This investment will help put America on the leading edge of clean biofuels production, and it's great for Nevada's economy."

Reid said the Obama administration first announced in 2011 that the U.S. Departments of Defense, Agriculture, and Energy would partner with the private sector to produce advanced drop-in aviation and marine biofuels to power military and commercial transportation.

Company officials estimated earlier the \$120 million plant will create more than 50 full-time and 450 temporary jobs.