



April 2, 2008

The Honorable Bob Etheridge  
1533 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Renewable Biomass Definition

Dear Congressman Etheridge:

On behalf of the Society of American Foresters and its more than 14,000 professional members, we would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to consider our concerns related to the definition of *Renewable Biomass* in the recently passed Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-140).

We have outlined those concerns in the attached letter we authored in February to Congressmen Dingell and Barton. We hope that you are equally disturbed by the limitations the current definition will place on the ability of private forest landowners to participate in the incentives provided by the Energy Act.

Because of the important role that forestry plays in North Carolina, and the increasing pressures felt by private forest landowners from development, it is inconceivable that a federal policy would prevent many of those same landowners from sharing in the potential economic benefits that renewable biomass energy could provide.

We at the national level, and our North Carolina state society stand ready to assist where we can with this issue, and we urge you to support Representative Herseth-Sandlin's bill (H.R. 5236) aimed at correcting the current definition.

Respectfully,

Michael T. Goergen  
Executive Vice-President

cc: North Carolina State SAF Society

Attachment





February 12, 2008

The Honorable John D. Dingell  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: *Renewable Biomass* definition

Dear Chairman Dingell and Ranking Member Barton:

We wish to express both our concern with the definition enacted in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (P.L. 110—140), and our support for the efforts of this committee to amend that definition in a manner best suited to meeting our nation's energy needs, as well as the equally important conservation and restoration needs of our public and private forests.

The existing definition in Title II artificially excludes from consideration as "renewable biomass" wood fiber generated from federal public lands, and from private lands other than those "actively managed" as plantations. This definition is needlessly narrow, and will serve to frustrate not only renewable energy production, but other forest management goals across the nation.

At a time when considerable legislative and agency efforts are being made to address global climate change, wildfire severity, and renewable energy production, it is regrettable that a definition would be promulgated that would equally obstruct all of these goals. The current definition will interfere with the ability to remove non-merchantable, small-diameter trees from our public lands, both as renewable fuels, and as a means for addressing the increasingly devastating wildfires we are experiencing. Any notion of climate change mitigation and adaptation of existing forests to changing environmental conditions will require the maximum in management flexibility for both public and private forests, and hampering that management with an unscientific and ill-conceived renewable biomass definition is unacceptable. Finally, the definition's arbitrary limits on qualifying private forest lands can only exacerbate the land-use conversion pressures faced by our smaller, private working forest landowners.

We commend your committee's current efforts to craft a more scientifically, socially, and ecologically appropriate definition that will balance the pressing management needs across our nation's forests, while at the same time safeguarding the important environmental and societal values provided by our forested lands. We would urge serious consideration of the bipartisan definitional approach taken by Representative Herseth-Sandlin (H.R. 5236) as a template for House action. And as always, we remain poised to assist with these efforts.

Respectfully,

Tom Thompson  
President, SAF

