**South Carolina General Assembly**

118th Session, 2009-2010

**S. 677**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

Senate Resolution

Sponsors: Senator Cromer

Document Path: l:\s-res\rwc\008fore.mrh.rwc.docx

Companion/Similar bill(s): 3899

Introduced in the Senate on April 2, 2009

Adopted by the Senate on April 2, 2009

Summary: Forest biomass

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

4/2/2009 Senate Introduced and adopted [SJ](file:///h:\SJ%20Archive\2009\04-02-09.docx)‑4

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[4/2/2009](file:///p:\pprever\2009-10\677_20090402.docx)

**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND ENCOURAGE THE USE OF FOREST BIOMASS FOR ENERGY PRODUCTS AS SOUTH CAROLINA’S MOST ABUNDANT SOURCE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY, AND TO URGE THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO TAKE ACTION TO CORRECT THE RESTRICTIVE AND INTRUSIVE DEFINITION OF RENEWABLE BIOMASS IN THE ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT OF 2007 AND TO PREVENT ADDITIONAL FEDERAL ACTIONS THAT WOULD ELIMINATE FOREST PRODUCT MARKETS FOR FOREST LANDOWNERS BY DEFINING “RENEWABLE BIOMASS” IN A RESTRICTIVE MANNER.

Whereas, South Carolina’s 12.9 million acres of forests represent the major land use in the State, covering 67% of South Carolina’s total land area; and

Whereas, the total economic impact of forestry in South Carolina is $17.45 billion annually; and

Whereas, forestry is the leading manufacturing industry in South Carolina in terms of employment and labor income; and

Whereas, 44,708 South Carolina citizens, earning $2.4 billion in income, are employed in forestry; and

Whereas, 11.325 million acres, 88% of South Carolina’s forestlands, are privately owned; and

Whereas, supporting emerging markets for forest products is essential to keeping South Carolina’s forestland in forests; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina Senate support the protection of the rights of private property owners; and

Whereas, South Carolina’s forests have the potential to sustainably supply 16 million tons per year of woody biomass to an emerging bio‑energy industry; and

Whereas, South Carolina sustainably produces enough woody biomass fuel to produce over 1,300 MW’s of power annually, which is enough to supply one‑third of the annual power requirements of all South Carolina homes, and

Whereas, woody biomass is South Carolina’s primary potential source of renewable energy; and

Whereas, using forest biomass to produce energy products offsets fossil fuel use and significantly reduces net carbon emissions and other pollutants; and

Whereas, the use of locally‑grown biomass for energy can replace imported fossil fuels and keep South Carolina energy dollars in South Carolina; and

Whereas, the development of a forest bio‑energy industry will provide additional jobs and retain jobs in South Carolina’s rural communities; and

Whereas, forest biomass harvests are a cost‑effective method to improve wildlife habitat, reduce wildfire hazard, improve tree growth, and remove diseased and infested trees; and

Whereas, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 placed restrictions unsupported by science on the source of biomass from privately‑owned forests that have been previously regenerated naturally, on forests that may be planted to trees in the future, and on “late successional” forests and other areas, resulting in the restriction of approximately 8.27 million acres of private forests in South Carolina from being utilized for biomass energy production toward the satisfaction of any federal renewable portfolio targets for renewable energy; and

Whereas, the restrictions placed by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 unduly restrict the ability of the forester or professional natural resource manager to apply science, site‑specific forest information and landowner objectives to his decisions about management for each forest area, thereby discouraging good conservation; and

Whereas, qualifying the source of biomass being harvested, processed, and delivered to bio‑energy facilities will be difficult and add undue costs; and

Whereas, the restrictions placed on conservation practices for the production of biomass from forests could set a precedent for federal control of specific conservation practices and forest products on privately‑owned property; and

Whereas, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Farm Bill) does not restrict the ability of local resource managers to properly manage forests and it provides a definition of “renewable biomass” and additional guidance that includes the use of “any organic matter available on a renewable or recurring basis”; and

Whereas, the State of South Carolina, through the South Carolina Forestry Commission and its allied agencies and non‑governmental organizations, provides best management practice guidelines, sustainability assessments, and other services and monitoring of the forest resources to ensure sustainability and good conservation. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate recognize and encourage the use of forest biomass for energy products as South Carolina’s most abundant source of renewable energy, and urge the United States Congress to take action to correct the restrictive and intrusive definition of renewable biomass in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and to prevent additional federal actions that would eliminate forest product markets for forest landowners by defining “renewable biomass” in a restrictive manner.

Be it further resolved that all federal legislation related to biomass, including the currently proposed Renewable Electricity Standards, follow a uniform definition of renewable biomass as contained in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, commonly referred to as the “Farm Bill.”

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