



31 Mar 08

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Pete Domenici
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States Senate
703 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Re: *Renewable Biomass* definition

Dear Chairman Bingaman and Ranking Member Domenici:

We echo the concern expressed to you by the Society of American Foresters (SAF) in their letter of Feb 12th, 2008: specifically, the definition enacted in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-140). Like the SAF, we too support the efforts of the committee to amend that definition to serve both the nation's energy needs, as well as the restoration of our forests and the protection of communities.

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 is needlessly narrow in-scope, and will not only frustrate renewable energy production, but restricts ecologically beneficial treatments to our forests and continues to leave many communities vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire.

It is regrettable that such a definition was promulgated when our country is faced with the challenges of climate change, wildfire severity and cost, and renewable energy production. We desperately need a definition that will facilitate and encourage the movement of non-merchantable, small-diameter trees from our forests, regardless of the site's jurisdiction or use, to an outcome that benefits our nation in many ways.

Along with the SAF, the Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP) commends your committee's current efforts to develop a more scientifically, socially, and ecologically appropriate definition that will safeguard and promote important environmental and societal values provided by our forested lands. We urge serious consideration of the bipartisan definitional approach taken by Representative Herseth-Sandlin (H.R. 5236) as a template for Senate action.

Respectfully,

Paul Summerfelt
President – Board of Directors

CC: Members, GFFP