



31 Mar 08

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 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 House action.

Respectfully,

Paul Summerfelt
President – Board of Directors

CC: Members, GFFP