

Senate Resolution 589

By: Senators Tolleson of the 20th, Powell of the 23rd, Hudgens of the 47th, Hawkins of the 49th, Chapman of the 3rd and others

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Requesting that the Congress of the United States take legislative action to change the current
2 definition of renewable biomass and prevent the passage of any legislation that would control
3 forest management practices on private forest lands; and for other purposes.
- 4 WHEREAS, Georgia's 24 million acres of forests represent major land use in the state,
5 occupying two-thirds of Georgia's total land area of 37 million acres, with 92 percent of
6 forest land privately owned; and
- 7 WHEREAS, the members of the Georgia Senate understand the importance of promoting the
8 rights of private property owners and support the adoption of sound land management
9 practices to ensure that forests are managed in a sustainable manner, and continue to provide
10 clean air, clean water, soil conservation, wildlife habitats, beauty, and recreational
11 opportunities; and
- 12 WHEREAS, there is an indisputable link between reforestation and sustainable management
13 of Georgia's private forests and the vibrant market for the wood and fiber produced in these
14 forests; and
- 15 WHEREAS, the health of Georgia's forests which provide wood and fiber directly
16 contributes to the success of the industry that converts these materials to thousands of
17 commercial products; and
- 18 WHEREAS, forestry is a leading industry in Georgia, creating more than 150,000 jobs and
19 having a \$28 billion annual economic impact; and
- 20 WHEREAS, Georgia's forests can provide biomass material to emerging biomass energy
21 production businesses and position Georgia as a national leader of energy production from
22 renewable resources; and

23 WHEREAS, the development of a forest bio-energy industry will provide additional jobs and
24 retain jobs in Georgia's rural communities; and

25 WHEREAS, using forest biomass to produce energy products offsets fossil fuel use,
26 significantly reduces net carbon emissions and other pollutants, reduces fossil fuel imports,
27 and keeps Georgia's energy dollars in Georgia; and

28 WHEREAS, forest biomass harvests are a cost-effective method to improve wildlife habitats,
29 reduce wildfire hazards, improve residual tree growth, and remove diseased and infested
30 trees; and

31 WHEREAS, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 placed restrictions
32 unsupported by science on the source of biomass from privately-owned forests, resulting in
33 the disqualification of approximately 15 million acres of private forests in Georgia from
34 being utilized for biomass energy production; and

35 WHEREAS, the restrictions placed by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007
36 discourages good conservation by unduly restricting the ability of the forester or other
37 professional natural resource managers to apply science, site-specific forest information, and
38 landowner objectives to forest management decisions; and

39 WHEREAS, restricting the source of biomass being harvested, processed, and delivered to
40 bio-energy facilities will add undue costs and burdens and could set a precedent for federal
41 control of specific conservation practices and forest production methods on privately owned
42 property; and

43 WHEREAS, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 does not restrict the ability of
44 local resource managers to properly manage forests, and it provides an appropriate definition
45 of "renewable biomass" by including "any organic matter available on a renewable or
46 recurring basis" in the definition; and

47 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia, through the Georgia Forestry Commission and other
48 agencies, provides best management practice guidelines, sustainability assessments, and
49 monitoring of forest resources to ensure sustainability and good conservation.

50 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
51 request that the United States Congress take action to correct the restrictive and intrusive

52 definition of renewable biomass in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and
53 prevent additional federal actions that would control forest management practices on private
54 forest lands by defining "renewable biomass" in a restrictive manner.

55 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body request that all federal
56 legislation related to biomass follow the uniform definition of renewable biomass as
57 contained in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

58 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
59 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to members of the Georgia congressional
60 delegation.