



December 6, 2007

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

The Honorable Pete Domenici,
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Definitions of *Renewable Biomass* in HR 2.

Dear Chairman Bingaman and Ranking Member Domenici:

On behalf of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and its more than 14,000 professional foresters and natural resource managers cross the United States, we wish to express our concern with the direction the House of Representatives has taken with the definition of "Renewable Biomass" in its latest version of the Renewable Fuel Standard component of a comprehensive energy act.

The House of Representatives' exclusions of biomass produced on federal lands, from naturally regenerated forest stands, and from "old growth" or late successional forests is scientifically baseless, and in fact fails to address the our nation's urgent forest health and carbon sequestration needs. There are any number of pragmatic problems in even attempting to implement the definitions as constructed by the House.

As a organization chartered to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry for the benefit of society, it is perhaps most distressing to the SAF that at a time when considerable efforts are being made to address global climate change—by preventing the conversion of forests to competing uses and by mitigating the likelihood of increasingly devastating wildfires, for example—that the House of Representatives would seriously suggest needlessly limiting the management options available to federal land managers, and would likewise diminish the market incentives available to private forest landowners to continue managing their forests as forests by resisting development pressures. As we begin to consider the production of energy from our forests in earnest, we should be willing to also consider a thoughtful palette of options, not preclude them prematurely.

We commend the Senates' effort to craft a more scientifically, socially, and ecologically appropriate definition that will balance the pressing forest management needs across our nation's forests, while at the same time safeguarding the important environmental and societal values provided by our forested lands. Consequently, we urge your committee and the Senate to prioritize retaining the Senate's definition of "Renewable Biomass" in any subsequent conference negotiations with the House of Representatives.

Respectfully,

Michael Goergen
Executive Vice-President

