

JAN 21 2022

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that urgent action is
2 required to avert long-term catastrophic impacts due to the
3 accumulation of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere.
4 Carbon dioxide is the most prevalent greenhouse gas. According
5 to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, when
6 carbon dioxide is emitted, it remains in the atmosphere for
7 three hundred to one thousand years. Other gases, prominently
8 methane, are even more dangerous to climate change.

9 Two simultaneous approaches are needed to make the Earth
10 more habitable for future generations:

11 (1) Greenhouse gas emissions must be drastically cut; and

12 (2) Mature forests must be preserved, while new forests
13 must be created to draw greenhouse gases out of the
14 atmosphere.

15 In addition, oceans must be cleaned of siltation, contamination,
16 and plastics to reduce their warming.



1 When the legislature established the renewable portfolio
2 standards model twenty years ago, all biomass was considered to
3 be renewable. However, recent research confirms that there are
4 vast differences between the carbon capture capacity of
5 herbaceous crops and trees, and forest preservation is a
6 critical strategy for controlling climate change. The
7 importance of forests has been underscored by scientists and
8 economists across the globe, who wrote to world leaders:

9 We urge you not to undermine both climate goals
10 and the world's biodiversity by shifting from burning
11 fossil fuels to burning trees to generate energy.

12 For decades, producers of paper and timber
13 products have generated electricity and heat as by-
14 products from their process wastes. This use does not
15 lead to the additional harvest of wood. In recent
16 years, however, there has been a misguided move to cut
17 down whole trees or to divert large portions of stem
18 wood for bioenergy, releasing carbon that would
19 otherwise stay locked up in forests.

20 The result of this additional wood harvest is a
21 large initial increase in carbon emissions, creating a



1 "carbon debt," which increases over time as more trees
2 are harvested for continuing bioenergy use. Regrowing
3 trees and displacement of fossil fuels may eventually
4 pay off this carbon debt, but regrowth takes time the
5 world does not have to solve climate change. As
6 numerous studies have shown, this burning of wood will
7 increase warming for decades to centuries. That is
8 true even when the wood replaces coal, oil or natural
9 gas.

10 The reasons are fundamental. Forests store
11 carbon – approximately half the weight of dry wood is
12 carbon.

13 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to exclude trees,
14 wood pellets, and other tree products made for burning, from the
15 types of biomass considered as renewable energy in the
16 determination of the renewable portfolio standard.

17 SECTION 2. Section 269-91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
18 amended by amending the definition of "renewable energy" to read
19 as follows:

20 ""Renewable energy" means energy generated or produced
21 using the following sources:



- (1) Wind;
- (2) The sun;
- (3) Falling water;
- (4) Biogas, including landfill and sewage-based digester gas;
- (5) Geothermal;
- (6) Ocean water, currents, and waves, including ocean thermal energy conversion;
- (7) [~~Biomass, including~~] Certain types of biomass, including herbaceous biomass crops, agricultural and animal residues and wastes, and municipal solid waste and other solid waste[+] but excluding trees, wood pellets, and other wood products made for burning;
- (8) Biofuels; and
- (9) Hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources."

SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY:

Jan Alcasio



S.B. NO. 2845

Report Title:

Renewable Energy; Biomass; Trees; Wood Products

Description:

Amends definition of "renewable energy" to exclude trees, wood pellets, and other wood products made for burning.

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