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# 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 recognizes that the rate and  
2 intensity of climate change is greater than predicted.  
3 According to remarks made by the United Nation's General  
4 Assembly President in 2019, less than a decade remains to stop  
5 irreversible damage and avert catastrophe from climate change.

6           Climate change is caused by excessive greenhouse gases in  
7 the atmosphere. The most prevalent greenhouse gas is carbon  
8 dioxide, which forms when fossil fuels, such as wood, coal, oil,  
9 or natural gas, are burned. According to the National  
10 Aeronautics and Space Administration, once carbon dioxide is  
11 emitted, it stays in the atmosphere for three hundred to one  
12 thousand years.

13           Twenty years ago, the legislature established the State's  
14 renewable portfolio standards model to ensure that Hawaii's  
15 electric utility companies transition from using fossil fuels to  
16 renewable energy. At the time, all biomass, including trees and  
17 wood pellets, was still considered a carbon neutral and



1 renewable energy source. However, when mature trees are cut and  
2 large portions of stem wood are burned to generate electricity,  
3 the emission of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere increases  
4 while the amount of carbon dioxide captured and stored from the  
5 atmosphere decreases. Recent data also has shown that newly  
6 planted trees are not effective until they have matured two or  
7 three decades later. With less than a decade to avoid a global  
8 climate disaster, tree plantations are not the most effective  
9 solution as they, and any carbon-rich soils that were disrupted  
10 to plant them, would emit more carbon than they can store.

11 The legislature finds that existing forests, especially  
12 older and middle-aged forests, are a vital component to control  
13 climate change. To ensure that the planet remains habitable for  
14 generations to come, not only must greenhouse gas emissions  
15 decrease drastically, but existing mature forests, which have  
16 superior carbon-sequestration abilities, must be preserved.

17 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to remove from the  
18 definition of "renewable energy" the energy generated or  
19 produced from trees, wood pellets, and other tree products made  
20 for burning.



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

4 "Renewable energy" means energy generated or produced  
5 using the following sources:

- 6 (1) Wind;
- 7 (2) The sun;
- 8 (3) Falling water;
- 9 (4) Biogas, including landfill and sewage-based digester  
10 gas;
- 11 (5) Geothermal;
- 12 (6) Ocean water, currents, and waves, including ocean  
13 thermal energy conversion;
- 14 (7) [~~Biomass, including~~] Herbaceous biomass crops,  
15 agricultural and animal residues and wastes, and  
16 municipal solid waste and other solid waste[+],  
17 excluding trees, wood pellets, and other wood products  
18 made for burning;
- 19 (8) Biofuels; and
- 20 (9) Hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources."





# S.B. NO. 2971

**Report Title:**

Renewable Energy; Renewable Portfolio Standard; Biomass; Trees;  
Wood Pellets; Tree Products

**Description:**

Removes from the definition of renewable energy the energy generated or produced from trees, wood pellets, and other tree products made for burning.

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