
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 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 The legislature further finds that climate change is
7 primarily caused by excessive greenhouse gases in the
8 atmosphere. The most prevalent greenhouse gas is carbon
9 dioxide, which is emitted when trash and fossil fuels such as
10 trees, coal, oil, or gas are burned. According to the National
11 Aeronautics and Space Administration, once carbon dioxide is
12 emitted, it stays in the atmosphere for three hundred to one
13 thousand years. Steps taken now to reduce the emission of
14 carbon dioxide will affect the livability of the planet for
15 generations.

16 The legislature also finds that twenty years ago, the
17 legislature established the State's renewable portfolio



1 standards model to ensure that the State's electric utility
2 companies transition from using fossil fuels to renewable
3 energy. At the time, biomass was considered a carbon neutral
4 energy source. However, recent data show that not to be true.

5 The legislature further finds that much of the biomass used
6 to generate electricity is wood in the form of trees or products
7 made from trees. Trees sequester carbon dioxide, and the
8 burning of trees and tree products releases carbon dioxide that
9 would have otherwise been sequestered. Regrowing trees takes
10 decades, and for this extended period, carbon dioxide that was
11 released stays in the atmosphere. Burning wood emits thirty to
12 fifty per cent more carbon on a per-unit-of-energy basis than
13 burning coal. Despite claims of sustainability, the biomass
14 energy industry is clearcutting forests that would otherwise be
15 extracting carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The United
16 States is one of the largest suppliers of the twenty-two million
17 tons of wood pellets consumed by the European Union each year.
18 Communities in Virginia, Mississippi, and North Carolina are
19 battling to protect forests from being fuel farms for European
20 biomass burners.



1 The legislature additionally finds that there is presently
2 no requirement that forests cut down for biomass energy will be
3 allowed to regrow instead of being cut again and again, or that
4 the land will not be developed for other uses. In short, there
5 is no guarantee that new forests will be allowed to grow large
6 enough to sequester as much carbon as the older, complex,
7 carbon-rich forests that were cut.

8 The legislature further finds that the biomass industry has
9 doubled in the last decade and is expected to expand by two
10 hundred fifty per cent in the next ten years. This expansion
11 would be a disaster for ecosystems upon which humans and animals
12 depend, and it is grossly inconsistent with the goals of the
13 Paris Climate Agreement. Intact forests are a vital part of the
14 climate solution because they sequester carbon dioxide from the
15 atmosphere and provide long term natural storage. Instead of
16 cutting down this valuable natural resource, forests should be
17 protected and allowed to sequester carbon, be a habitat for
18 wildlife, and provide space for recreation, clean air, and
19 water.



1 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to remove biomass
2 from the renewable portfolio standards definition of renewable
3 energy.

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

7 ""Renewable energy" means energy generated or produced
8 using the following sources:

- 9 (1) Wind;
- 10 (2) The sun;
- 11 (3) Falling water;
- 12 (4) Biogas, including landfill and sewage-based digester
13 gas;
- 14 (5) Geothermal;
- 15 (6) Ocean water, currents, and waves, including ocean
16 thermal energy conversion;
- 17 ~~[-(7) Biomass, including biomass crops, agricultural and~~
18 ~~animal residues and wastes, and municipal solid waste~~
19 ~~and other solid waste,~~
- 20 ~~-(8)]~~ (7) Biofuels; and
- 21 ~~[-(9)]~~ (8) Hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources."



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

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

4

INTRODUCED BY: *Sen 012*

JAN 25 2023



H.B. NO. 1463

Report Title:

Renewable Portfolio Standards; Renewable Energy; Definition;
Biomass

Description:

Removes biomass from the renewable portfolio standard definition
of renewable energy.

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