

JAN 21 2026

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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 finds that the State's  
2 renewable energy portfolio standards, which are designed to  
3 transition the State from fossil fuels to renewable fuels for  
4 electricity generation, require refinement to ensure that they  
5 are consistent with, and contribute to, the State's zero  
6 emissions clean economy target.

7       The legislature further finds that some electricity  
8 generation sources that are currently defined as renewable for  
9 the purpose of the renewable portfolio standards could result in  
10 relatively high greenhouse gas emissions when considering the  
11 entire lifecycle of an energy source from production to burning.  
12 In some cases, the resulting emissions are equivalent to  
13 emissions produced by fossil fuels. The legislature also finds  
14 that using these high-emission sources for electricity  
15 generation undermines the State's clean energy goals.

16       For example, trees, and woody products of trees, that are  
17 harvested and burnt to generate electricity emit copious amounts



1 of greenhouse gases. While trees that are harvested for this  
2 purpose can be replaced with new plantings, the carbon debt  
3 payback period for trees burnt to generate electricity is  
4 decades long. Such long payback periods are incompatible with  
5 the State's zero emissions clean economy target. The  
6 legislature additionally finds that the State relies on its  
7 forests and trees to absorb carbon and thereby help meet its net  
8 greenhouse gas emissions reductions goal. Burning trees for  
9 electricity only undermines this goal.

10 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 11 (1) Establish a lifecycle greenhouse gas emission  
12 intensity standard that an energy source must meet to  
13 be considered a renewable energy source; and  
14 (2) Exclude trees and woody products of trees from the  
15 definition of "renewable energy".

16 SECTION 2. Section 269-91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
17 amended as follows:

18 1. By adding a new definition to be appropriately inserted  
19 and to read as follows:

20 "Lifecycle greenhouse gas emission intensity" means the  
21 total emissions expressed in carbon dioxide equivalent per unit

1 of energy delivered, accounting for anticipated powerplant  
2 efficiency at all lifecycle stages, as determined by a lifecycle  
3 emissions assessment."

4 2. By amending the definition of "biofuels" to read:

5 ""Biofuels" means liquid or gaseous fuels produced from  
6 organic sources such as biomass crops, agricultural residues and  
7 oil crops, such as palm oil, canola oil, sunflower oil, camelina  
8 oil, soybean oil, waste cooking oil, grease, and food wastes,  
9 animal residues and wastes, and sewage and landfill wastes[-];  
10 provided that the source crop, waste, or residue was not  
11 harvested or raised on land cleared of forest after December 18,  
12 2007."

13 3. By amending the definition of "cost-effective" to read:

14 ""Cost-effective" means the ability to produce or purchase  
15 electric energy or firm capacity, or both, from renewable energy  
16 resources at or below avoided costs or as the commission  
17 otherwise determines to be just and [~~reasonable~~] reasonably  
18 consistent with the methodology set by the public utilities  
19 commission in accordance with section 269-27.2."

20 4. By amending the definition of "renewable energy" to  
21 read:

1       ""Renewable energy" means energy generated or produced  
2   using any of the following sources[+]; provided that the source  
3   shall have a lifecycle greenhouse gas emission intensity of less  
4   than one hundred and fifty grams of carbon dioxide equivalent  
5   per kilowatt-hour delivered:

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 biomass crops, agricultural and  
15      animal residues and wastes, and municipal solid waste  
16      and other solid waste[+] except:

17      (A) Trees and woody products of trees; and

18      (B) Any crops or agricultural or animal residue or  
19      waste harvested or raised on land cleared of  
20      forest after December 18, 2007;

21      (8) Biofuels; and



1           (9) Hydrogen produced from other renewable energy  
2           sources."

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

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

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INTRODUCED BY: Mike Gabbert



# S.B. NO. 2331

**Report Title:**

Public Utilities Commission; Renewable Energy Portfolio;  
Standards; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Renewable Energy; Trees

**Description:**

Establishes a lifecycle greenhouse gas emission intensity standard that an energy source must meet to be considered a renewable energy source. Excludes trees and woody products of trees from the definition of "renewable energy".

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