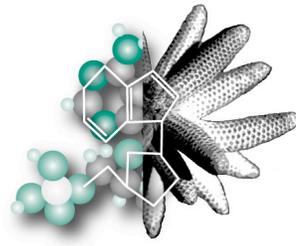


# Pine Genome Initiative



---

March 30, 2009

Dianne Feinstein; Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Lamar Alexander; Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Ranking Member Alexander,

We are writing to urge you to fully fund the forest biomass energy research program authorized by Section 9012 of the Energy Title added by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Farm Bill) (7 U.S.C. 8112). Research Funding is desperately needed to unlock the bioenergy potential from our nation's forests while benefitting communities that rely on current forest resources. Section 9012 has authorized \$15 Million a year for 4 years, and would support much needed research in the areas of:

- Development of technology and techniques to use low-value forest biomass for the production of energy;
- Development of processes that integrate production of energy into biorefineries or other existing manufacturing streams;
- Development of new transportation fuels from forest biomass;
- Improvement of the growth and yield of trees intended for renewable energy production.

Forest biomass can help fuel America's future. Biomass currently has heat and power applications, but research is needed to cost effectively develop liquid transportation fuels from trees. Relying on fossil fuels, particularly imported oil, to meet our nation's transportation energy needs has created economic, climate change, and national security problems. Our Nation's forests can provide an abundant, renewable, home-grown biomass resource that is crucial to meeting the EISA 2007 mandate of replacing 36 billion gallons of transportation fuels with biofuels by 2022.

Trees are the lifeblood of many rural communities and forest product companies that rely on the sustainable biomass our forests provide. And for good reason – timber has the highest annual farm gate value of any crop other than corn. Research and investment in our forests will result in greater biomass yields for energy and other wood products. Biofuels from trees have the potential to help meet these goals and benefit the environment. However, wood-based transportation fuels will not be a viable option unless we increase productivity and conversion efficiencies of our forest resources; and this will require an investment in research. More renewable energy, more sustainable wood-based products, more carbon sequestration, and healthier forest-based communities are all possible with additional support for forest tree research.

Given the tremendous benefits of such research, we ask you to support Section 9012 of the Farm Bill for appropriation. Once these technical hurdles are crossed, our nation's biofuel backbone will start with cellulose.

Sincerely,

Agenda 2020 Technology Alliance

Biofuels Center of North Carolina

Forest Landowners Association

Institute of Forest Biotechnology

National Association of University Forest Resource Programs

Pine Genome Initiative