SENATE RESOLUTION 12-003


CONCERNING MEASURES TO CREATE COLORADO JOBS BY ENCOURAGING ACTIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT FOR HEALTHY FOREST ECOSYSTEMS AND THE USE OF COLORADO FOREST BIOMASS AS A SOURCE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY.

WHEREAS, The state of Colorado is experiencing one of the most significant droughts in recent history; and

WHEREAS, Current data shows that 98 percent of Colorado has been designated in drought condition; and

WHEREAS, Forest health and protection of our watersheds is critical to water quality and availability; and

WHEREAS, Colorado has one of the most at-risk forest ecosystems in the western United States due to 4,000,000 acres of dead timber and comparatively limited forest management efforts on federal, state, and private lands; and

WHEREAS, More than 2,000,000 people and nearly 900 communities are located in areas of the 10 counties along the Front Range that are at risk of wildfires; and

WHEREAS, The forests of the Front Range furnish drinking water to more than two-thirds of the state's population; and

WHEREAS, Of the 4,200,000 acres of the Front Range watershed that are part of the drinking water supply, 65 percent are at high risk of...
post-fire erosion; and

WHEREAS, To the extent that Colorado's ecosystem and economy operate on interrelated large and small scales to function effectively, state action is needed to implement large-scale solutions; and

WHEREAS, As stated at the Front Range roundtable in August 2011: "Wildfire and insect epidemics don't recognize political or ownership boundaries. Restoration must occur at a scale large enough to influence the behavior of these forces across the landscape."; and

WHEREAS, The coordination of efforts to create landscape-level solutions to restore Colorado forest ecosystems, primarily, and secondarily, to promote the use of clean energy generated from biomass will improve the efficiency of efforts to reach both of these goals and, in the process, can serve to stimulate economic development in rural Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 11-267, enacted in 2011, created a working group convened by the Colorado State Forest Service that made recommendations with regard to managing for a forest energy industry, compiling and disseminating information, and developing policy to execute and improve forest management tools; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Sixty-eighth General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

That we, the members of the Colorado Senate, request:

(1) That Colorado's state forester respond to the crisis with forest management contracts that implement the priorities identified by Colorado's place-based, local forest collaboratives in order to bring greater value to wood resources from critical areas, including the wildland-urban interface and watersheds, by utilizing Colorado's emerging biomass energy industry and by creating timber industry jobs in forest restoration for rural communities and under-utilized workforce populations such as veterans and the youth corps;

(2) That the Colorado State Forest Service:
(a) Work with the United States Forest Service on forest stewardship agreements and facilitate contracts authorized by the United States Department of Agriculture;

(b) Work with the United States Forest Service and the United States Bureau of Land Management on projects authorized under the good neighbor authority, as defined in section 23-31-313 (3), Colorado Revised Statutes, and facilitate forest products sales contracts;

(c) Identify areas and prioritize contracts for forest management on public and private lands in priority landscapes identified by local forest collaboratives and specified in the Colorado statewide forest resource assessment and strategy, initiated in response to a mandate from the United States Forest Service pursuant to Pub.L. 110-234, with emphasis on water supplies and areas in the wildland-urban interface;

(d) Value forest products on state lands using lowest market value and encourage the removal of wood material with the primary harvest in accordance with forest management protocols promoting healthy forest ecosystems and without creating a disincentive for using prescribed fires;

(e) Continue to actively manage forest stewardship plans for all state-owned lands, including plans for long-term, reliable feedstock sources for woody biomass and wood products;

(f) Foster local, place-based forest collaborative efforts that include the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management and identify consensus priority treatment areas from which a reliable, statewide woody biomass supply estimate for the next ten years may be developed;

(g) Work with Colorado's water community, including the basin roundtables created in section 37-75-104, Colorado Revised Statutes, to identify significant areas of priority landscapes that pose post-fire soil hazard risk to water supplies in the watershed for preventative restoration and fuel mitigation;

(h) Explore and identify potential funding sources for forest management and energy projects in Colorado, including state and federal tax incentives, cost-share and grant programs, and financing tools such as
loans, bonds, and contracts; and

(i) Identify and map areas of high risk of wildfire, high risk of post-fire soil erosion in water supply areas, and adverse economic impacts as a result of wildfire or post-fire soil erosion and provide the geographic designations identified and mapped to the enterprise zone review task force, formed pursuant to House Bill 12-1241, enacted in 2012, and the Colorado Economic Development Commission;

(3) That the enterprise zone review task force review the geographic designations of high risk areas provided by the Colorado State Forest Service and the applicability of future enterprise zones to associated wood product and energy generation industries;

(4) That the Colorado Economic Development Commission and the Colorado Department of Agriculture promote forest industries and products derived from Colorado forests;

(5) That the air quality control commission in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, within existing resources, analyze a range of residential, commercial, and industrial equipment for air emissions standards, identify equipment that meets the emissions standards, publicly post a statement of the parameters for equipment fueled by woody biomass that is smaller than one million British thermal units, as defined in section 8-20-201 (1.3), Colorado Revised Statutes, per hour, and include a list of woody biomass equipment that meets the emissions standards; and

(6) That the Governor's Energy Office, or its successor office:

(a) With the engagement of stakeholders, evaluate the landscape of renewable thermal heating and cooling technologies and renewable cogeneration technologies in Colorado, identify potential renewable thermal and cogeneration incentives nationally and internationally that could serve as models for Colorado, and identify and assess financial incentives available for renewable thermal and cogeneration technologies for both residential and commercial uses; and

(b) Report to the House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee
on Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Energy, or their successor committees, by January 1, 2013.

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Resolution be sent to the Governor's Energy Office, or its successor office, the Colorado Office of Economic Development, the Colorado Economic Development Commission, the Colorado State Forest Service, the Department of Agriculture, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Governor John Hickenlooper, United States Senator Michael Bennet, United States Senator Mark Udall, and United States Representatives Diana DeGette, Jared Polis, Scott Tipton, Cory Gardner, Doug Lamborn, Mike Coffman, and Ed Perlmutter.

Brandon C. Shaffer  Cindi Markwell
PRESIDENT OF  SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE  THE SENATE