

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas)

2213 Dirksen Building, Washington, D.C. 20510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 18, 1979

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DOLE PROPOSES PROGRAM TO PRODUCE ALTERNATE FUELS FROM FARM AND FOREST PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON-- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) and sixteen other members of the Senate Agriculture and Forestry Committee have introduced legislation which would dramatically increase production of energy from farm and forest products.

The bill, "The Agricultural, Forestry and Rural Energy Act of 1979", would designate the Department of Agriculture as the lead federal agency for the development and production alternative fuels from agricultural commodities and forest products. It would add a new title XX to the Food and Agricultural Act.

Specifically, the bill sets the following goal: To enable the United States to achieve net energy independence for agricultural and forest production, processing and marketing, and a 50 percent reduction in petroleum and natural gas use by rural residents and communities, by the year 2000.

"This would have a tremendous positive effect on our energy situation," said Dole. "As a long-time supporter of gasohol research and alternative fuel production, I am proud to be a sponsor of this comprehensive measure. I believe it will, for the first time, bring rational management to what has been a rather hit-or-miss effort. The production of fuel from biomass, whether it's grains from the midwest or forest products from Georgia, New England, or the Pacific Northwest, will aid the entire nation as we search for ways to get out from under OPEC."

The bill would: 1) Require the Secretary of Agriculture to implement an agricultural, forestry and rural energy production, use, and conservation program designed to meet the 2000 goals; 2) Require the Secretary, jointly with other federal agencies, to coordinate rural and agricultural energy programs under title XX; 3) Establish the Agricultural, Forestry and Rural Energy Board to assess rural energy needs and resources, and develop production and conservation programs; 4) Provide for research and development, including appropriations of \$50 million annually to support applied research by state agricultural research stations to develop renewable resources energy production and rural energy production, and, appropriations-- of \$50 million annually under the Smith-Lever Act, and \$5 million annually under the Forest and Rangelands Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978-- would be authorized for rural energy extension work by state extension services; 5) Establish four wood energy centers, each in a different region, to perform research, provide technical assistance, and operate demonstration projects relating to wood energy production and use; 6) For five years, authorize up to \$10 million annually in loans for the establishment of fuelwood distribution centers that make fuelwood available to homeowners; 7) Establish four agricultural biomass energy centers, each in a different part of the country, in areas where there is intensive production of agricultural commodities, to perform research, provide technical assistance, train extension personnel to conduct biomass workshops, and generally aid in establishing biomass energy projects; 8) Direct the Secretary to make loans for on-farm or commercial projects for the production of energy from commodities or forest products-- \$250 million in direct loans and loan guarantees for \$1 billion in other loans, annually.

Alternative Electric Projects

The bill would also amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to authorize loans to rural electric cooperatives for projects to generate electricity using non-fossil fuel sources, including wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal, wood, peat, biomass products and fuel cells.

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