

**First Regular Session
Seventy-first General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

BILL 1

LLS NO. R17-0114.01 Ashley Zimmerman x229 **INTERIM Committee Joint Resolution**

Wildfire Matters Review Committee

COMMITTEE JOINT RESOLUTION

101 **CONCERNING THE COLORADO GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S SUPPORT FOR**
102 **THE CONTINUED USE OF BIOCHAR IN OUR NATIONAL FORESTS.**

1 WHEREAS, Biochar is a solid material obtained when organic
2 matter is heated in an oxygen-limited environment; and

3 WHEREAS, Biochar production is modeled after "terra preta",
4 Portuguese for "dark earth", a process used thousands of years ago in
5 Brazil's Amazon basin, where indigenous people created islands of rich,
6 fertile soils that continue to hold carbon today and remain nutrient rich;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, Biochar has been used as a reforestation tool by the
9 United States Forest Service (USFS) in our national forests; and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

1 WHEREAS, Treatments to thin forests, decrease fuel loads, and
2 clear out insect- and disease-killed trees can be expensive because there
3 are currently few markets for small roundwood and virtually no markets
4 for residual material, such as tops and limbs, and many timber sales are
5 judged by potential bidders to be economically infeasible; and

6 WHEREAS, Biochar provides a potential economic use of woody
7 biomass that can help offset fuel reduction project costs, which means
8 more acres can be treated; and

9 WHEREAS, Removing excess forest biomass for use as a resource
10 for biochar can minimize the number and severity of wildfires and
11 thereby save both dollars and lives; and

12 WHEREAS, Biochar stores carbon in the ground that may
13 otherwise be released into the atmosphere from wildfires; and

14 WHEREAS, Biochar can be produced from whole trees, such as
15 the lodgepole and ponderosa pine found in Colorado forests, and can also
16 be made from residual materials and insect- and disease-killed trees; and

17 WHEREAS, The USFS has been researching the use of biochar as
18 a soil amendment, including ongoing research on soil test plots by station
19 scientists at the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Fort Collins,
20 Colorado, and has found that several potential applications and markets
21 exist for biochar, including use for reforestation treatments; and

22 WHEREAS, The Agricultural Research Service of the United
23 States Department of Agriculture (ARS) also conducts research on the use
24 and application of biochar as a soil amendment; and

25 WHEREAS, USFS studies have found that biochar in soils attracts
26 and holds water, increases ion exchange capacity, makes soil more
27 porous, and enhances absorption of organic compounds, all of which
28 enhance soil productivity and facilitate plant growth to reduce erosion and
29 restore compacted, oxidized, and degraded soils, such as those that exist
30 after devastating wildfires; and

31 WHEREAS, The ARS has found that the addition of biochar to
32 soils may increase soil carbon, soil nutrient content, and plant
33 productivity and that the quality of biochar is important to achieve these
34 results; and

1 WHEREAS, Biochar also can be used in filters, such as those used
2 in water treatment facilities, and well-established markets exist for
3 activated carbon; and

4 WHEREAS, Energy, in electrical, thermal, and liquid fuel forms,
5 can be an important co-product of biochar production from forest
6 residues; and

7 WHEREAS, Biochar as a raw material can be further processed
8 into an engineered biocarbon that will be valuable in production
9 agriculture and forestry as well as in turf, nursery, and environmental
10 applications; and

11 WHEREAS, Biochar can reduce the cost and increase the
12 nutritional value of food; and

13 WHEREAS, Colorado is a national leader in the advancement of
14 biochar research and development; and

15 WHEREAS, Biochar can increase the economic value and
16 productivity of Colorado soils and benefit Colorado farmers by reducing
17 expenditures for fertilizer and irrigation; and

18 WHEREAS, Biochar can enhance rural economic development
19 and employment, in both the production and placement of biochar (i.e.
20 "Forests to Farms" programs); now, therefore,

21 *Be It Resolved by the _____ of the Seventy-first General Assembly*
22 *of the State of Colorado, the _____ concurring herein:*

23 That we, the members of the Colorado general assembly, support
24 the United States Forest Service, the Agricultural Research Service of the
25 United States Department of Agriculture, and other research into the
26 removal of fuel loads on the forest floor for the creation of biochar and
27 the use of biochar as a soil amendment for reforestation, the continued
28 creation of biochar from woody biomass found in our forests, and the use
29 of biochar as a soil amendment within our forests and farms, towns, and
30 cities to assist with reforestation treatments.

31 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
32 to Governor John Hickenlooper, the Rocky Mountain Research Station
33 of the United States Forest Service, State Forester Mike Lester, Action

1 Region 2 Regional Forester Jacque Buchanan, United States Forest
2 Service Deputy Chief for State and Private Forestry Jim Hubbard,
3 Commissioner of Agriculture Don Brown, Agricultural Research Service
4 Plains Area Director Laurence Chandler, and each member of Colorado's
5 Congressional Delegation.