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## Southern bioenergy industry could create thousands of jobs

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC –The South is in a unique position to create thousands of jobs for Southerners through the development of the bioenergy industry, a new report says. The Southern Bioenergy Roadmap, a project of the Southeast Agriculture & Forestry Energy Resources Alliance (SAFER) and the University of Florida, shows that the South has abundant natural resources and intellectual capital to produce electricity and automotive fuel from plants, trees, and waste, also known as biomass.

The report found that, in 2007, the South:

- Contained 30 percent of the nation's bioenergy potential in its agricultural and forestry resources;
- Produced 46 percent of the nation's biomass generated electricity;
- Produced 22 percent of the nation's biodiesel, but only 6.4 percent of the nation's ethanol; and
- Hosted bioenergy research centers in every state.

SAFER presented these findings to Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen, chairman of Southern Growth Policies Board's Southern Technology Council, who commented that "this is a key time for the South to lead the nation in new technologies for converting biomass into energy." Governor Bredesen also said, "The State of Tennessee has shown a commitment to helping the South become the national leader in bioenergy through its support of the Tennessee Biofuels Initiative and the BioEnergy Science Center at Oak Ridge National Laboratory."

For the South to become the nation's leader in the research, production, and distribution of bioenergy, the Roadmap recommends states (1) Improve the supply, demand, and regulatory environment for bioenergy in the South, (2) Invest in the development of commercial biopower and biofuel facilities in the South, and (3) Educate Southern leaders and the public on the economic and environmental benefits of bioenergy.

Liam Leightley, Chairman of SAFER and Executive Director of the Institute of Advanced Learning and Research in Danville, Virginia, said, "The Roadmap provides a starting point for building on the region's assets and addressing the barriers to the bioenergy industry in the South." "By wisely using our resources we can move closer to energy independence and at the same time create good jobs for our rural communities," Leightley added.

The full report can be found at <http://www.saferalliance.net/projects/roadmap.html>.

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### **About the Southeast Agriculture & Forestry Energy Resources Alliance**

The Southeast Agriculture & Forestry Energy Resources Alliance was formed in 2006 through an initiative of the Energy Foundation in conjunction with the national 25x'25 committee with the purpose of bringing together representation from across the renewable energy landscape including landowners, farmers, businesses, non-profits, and government entities. States in the SAFER region are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Southern Growth Policies Board is the management and fiscal agent of SAFER. More information about SAFER can be found at [www.saferalliance.net](http://www.saferalliance.net).