

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 413 Session of
2008

INTRODUCED BY ORIE, WASHINGTON, RAFFERTY, KASUNIC, RHOADES,
WAUGH, KITCHEN AND GREENLEAF, OCTOBER 8, 2008

REFERRED TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, OCTOBER 8, 2008

A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing the Congress of the United States to amend
2 existing "food-to-fuel" mandates and immediately embark on a
3 series of policy remedies aimed at the production of advanced
4 biofuels.

5 WHEREAS, The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the
6 price of basic foods in the United States is currently rising at
7 twice the rate of inflation and is expected to continue to
8 escalate in the future; and

9 WHEREAS, This rapid escalation in food costs has created an
10 enormous strain on low-income families and people living on
11 fixed incomes in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and around the
12 nation, particularly at this time of economic uncertainty; and

13 WHEREAS, The inflation in food prices has also strained the
14 ability of local government agencies to meet the food needs of
15 residents, especially those residents who rely on Federal food
16 stamps; and

17 WHEREAS, The World Bank, United Nations (UN) and other
18 international institutions reported that, globally, the prices
19 of food staples have risen at increasing rates, creating what

1 has been called a "silent tsunami" that is pushing hundreds of
2 millions of impoverished people to the brink of starvation and
3 creating untold human suffering and political instability; and

4 WHEREAS, Several UN agencies, relief groups and the
5 International Monetary Fund have established that as much as 30%
6 of the increase in food prices is related to policies that
7 mandate the conversion of food crops, including corn and soy,
8 for the production of ethanol; and

9 WHEREAS, These "food-to-fuel" mandates are only one of the
10 factors driving higher food costs that are directly under the
11 control of the Federal Government; and

12 WHEREAS, The Department of Agriculture estimated that, in
13 this year alone, approximately one-third of all corn grown in
14 the United States will be diverted to produce ethanol; and

15 WHEREAS, It has been reported in peer-reviewed studies
16 conducted by leading climate scientists, including Princeton
17 researcher Tom Searchinger, that not only are "food-to-fuel"
18 mandates driving up costs of food staples, but they are also
19 causing severe environmental damage; and

20 WHEREAS, Such damage to the environment is caused by the
21 clearing of forests, wetlands and grasslands for expanded
22 agricultural production, thus adding to the release of global
23 carbon emissions and exacerbating the global climate change
24 crisis; and

25 WHEREAS, It has been established that the most promising path
26 to energy independence and environmental protection lies in the
27 promotion of truly renewable fuel sources such as advanced
28 cellulosic biofuels that rely on nonfood feedstocks, including
29 agricultural waste, woodchips and switchgrass; and

30 WHEREAS, Congress should create new policies that phase out

1 the use of food crops for biofuel production, promote increased
2 investment in advanced biofuels and provide immediate food
3 relief for vulnerable populations in the United States and poor
4 nations around the world; and

5 WHEREAS, Governor Rendell should also invoke his right to
6 petition the Environmental Protection Agency for a waiver from
7 Federal ethanol mandates, as provided in the Energy Policy Act
8 of 2005; therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
10 memorialize the Congress of the United States to amend existing
11 "food-to-fuel" mandates and immediately embark on a series of
12 policy remedies aimed at the production of advanced biofuels;
13 and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
15 the presiding officers of each house of Congress and to each
16 member of Congress from Pennsylvania.