

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 81

BY REPRESENTATIVES ECHOLS AND ROMERO AND SENATOR CATHEY

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To establish the ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor Commission to consider and make recommendations regarding the creation of an ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor, a multistate wood basket collaborative between Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and to serve as the Louisiana delegation for such collaborative when it is established.

WHEREAS, the economic impacts of forestry and related industries to the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi cannot be overstated; and

WHEREAS, forestry in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi provides one of the largest sources of employment for each state, supporting hundreds of primary and secondary wood-using industries from harvest and transportation to manufacturing and technological innovation, in addition to providing income for public and private landowners and millions of dollars in severance, local, and state taxes each year; and

WHEREAS, timber alone is used to manufacture building materials, paper, chemical products, furniture, fixtures, and many other products used in daily life, while timber manufacturing residues are used to produce mulch, bedding, fuel, and other products, and the industry supports the operation of sawmills, panel plants, paper and pulp mills, chip mills, peeling plants, treatment facilities, and secondary manufacturers such as furniture companies, millwork, and cabinet manufacturers; and

WHEREAS, in addition, forest biomass is a renewable and widely available byproduct of the industry that has long been used to generate thermal energy and has seen increasing use as feedstock for the production of bioenergy, biofuels, and other bioproducts; and

WHEREAS, the compression of biomass into pellets or chips is an example of bioinnovation that has allowed for cleaner burning and more cost effective transportation of biofuels; and

WHEREAS, if considered together as one ArkLaMiss wood basket, the forest management, harvest schedules, transportation, manufacturing operations, and bioinnovation centers of southeast Arkansas, northeast Louisiana, and western Mississippi could be optimized to respond more efficiently to natural threats and the global market; and

WHEREAS, an ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor, managed through commissions established in each state, could provide such optimization for the benefit of economic development and sustainability of the forestry and related industries in each state; and

WHEREAS, optimization of the ArkLaMiss wood basket could also position the ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor as a world leader in future supply chain reliability and global energy security; and

WHEREAS, given the importance of these industries and the complexity of forming a multistate collaborative, it is therefore in the state's interest that the legislature should create a commission to consider the creation of an ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor and related issues and report its findings and recommendations to the legislature.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby establish the ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor Commission to study and make recommendations regarding the creation of an ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, at a minimum, the commission shall consider and make recommendations regarding the following:

(1) Legal and legislative requirements to establish the ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor.

(2) Structure and governance of the ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor.

(3) The powers, duties, and decision-making process for and among state commissions for the ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor.

(4) The main goals and objectives of the state commissions individually and acting collectively for ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission may also consider any other matter relevant to the ArkLaMiss Timber and Bioinnovation Corridor, including but not limited to (1) improvements to infrastructure between the three states that may help maximize opportunities; (2) rural development opportunities for a collective ArkLaMiss wood basket; (3) identification of stakeholders, including industry, governmental, trade, advocacy, and biotech representatives that may be able to contribute to policy making; (4) technological advancements in the industry that could be capitalized on through the multistate collaborative.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the commission are encouraged to collaborate with their counterparts in Arkansas and Mississippi as appropriate to further the goals of the commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall be composed of the following members:

(1) One member from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, to be appointed by the secretary.

(2) One member from Louisiana Economic Development appointed by the secretary.

(3) One member from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry appointed by the commissioner.

(4) The state representative for House District 14.

(5) Two members from the Louisiana House of Representatives appointed by the speaker.

(6) Three members from the Louisiana Senate appointed by the president.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the commission shall serve without compensation, except per diem or expense reimbursement to which they may individually be entitled as members of their constituent organizations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each appointing authority shall submit the names of their appointments to the state representative for House District No. 14 no later than July 31, 2023.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall convene its first meeting no later than September 1, 2023, at the call of the state representative representing House District No. 14.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the commission shall elect a chairman and other officers as it deems appropriate at the first meeting.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, Louisiana Economic Development, or the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry may provide staff support to the commission and the commission may receive additional assistance from any agency with membership on the commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations on or before February 1, 2025, to the Legislature of Louisiana and the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the secretary of Louisiana Economic Development, the commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives, and the president of the Louisiana Senate.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE