

EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER  
FIRST DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
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AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
THE BUDGET

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1001**

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May 3, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chair  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting funding for a Southeastern Regional Pilot Laboratory for Developing Next-Generation Forest Products Industry in fiscal year 2025. The entity to receive funding for this project is the Georgia Institute of Technology, located at 237 Uncle Heinie Way Atlanta, GA 30332.

The funding would be used for a Southeastern Regional Pilot Laboratory for Developing Next-Generation Forest Products Industry at Georgia Tech.

The project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because Georgia's working forests are an engine for developing US leadership in new sources of carbon neutral fuels and chemicals, through products made in rural communities. The goal of this project is to enable a renewables-based economy from wood through resource, technology, and business development, to generate a wide range of materials, and intends not to interfere with logging activities, harvesting cycles, replanting, lumber production or distribution, or pulp and paper manufacture. However, the need is in translational research and development activities that bridge laboratory to implementation.

Establishing a Southeastern Regional Pilot Laboratory for Developing Next-Generation Forest Products Industry couples with and supports other initiatives in transportation fuels opportunities, specifically how chemical products must go hand-in-hand with fuels. The funds will cover new equipment that is difficult to fund through competitive programs, which will target bolstering Georgia's leadership in developing next-generation forest product technologies. These ground-breaking technologies aim to accomplish chemical transformation of woody biomass to useful products in hours, compared to the geologically slow natural processes that formed petroleum from plants over millions of years.

Additionally, the equipment will be used for research and development and for workforce development and training. GT's Renewable Bioproducts Institute (RBI) has been very successful in sending graduates out to work in the Georgia rural forest products industry. Further, Georgia universities, companies, and non-profits are poised to develop and strengthen an interdisciplinary community focusing on advancing a renewable, wood-based bioeconomy. RBI's Center for a Renewables-based Economy from WOOD (ReWOOD) has 11 university partners throughout the Southeast that are already collaborating on this topic of research.

The sought-after US Bioeconomy cannot work without accessing a larger supply of renewable biomass. While the pulp and paper industry has cultivated working forests (i.e., trees grown as crops) across the SE US, this resource is underutilized as a prospect for the future production of fuels and chemicals. Most efforts today are on agricultural energy crops. The use of forest biomass, without impacting other industries depending on this resource, is a necessary part of making a bioeconomy work.

The ReWOOD effort also provides a market for woody biomass that is beginning to become in excess in the Southeast, due in combination to very successful replanting efforts by the forest industry and due in part to waning market forces in wood pellets for energy. The envisioned developments will create 'high margin' chemical products to supplement the low margins achieved on biofuels. These high margin products that can be produced from biomass, in rural areas, can include plastics that replace nylon in clothing, drugs that are difficult to produce from US feedstocks today, and agricultural chemicals.

The working forests present in rural areas of the Southeast, and Georgia in particular, stand to gain significant environmental, financial, and social benefits. By producing a broad slate of fuels and chemical products from natural wood residues, the forest landowners and biorefineries of Georgia and the Southeastern US can significantly transform their communities. These innovative technologies also hold exciting potential for re-shoring of lost U.S. manufacturing capabilities.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes described in section 272 of title 15, United States Code.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress