



An Act in Arkansas, A Bill in Indiana

Two States Pass Legislation Modeled After Federal Biobased Program

In its 2005 session, the Arkansas Legislature passed a law that requires state agencies to give purchasing preference to biobased products. In 2007, a similar bill passed in Indiana and was signed into law by the governor on April 4. Both of these laws are based on the certification process established in the 2002 Farm Bill that is currently being implemented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA.)

"Once the USDA certifies a product category as 'biobased', then agencies in the State government of Arkansas must consider using biobased products just like in the Federal Government," explains State Representative Johnny Key, from Arkansas.

"Our bill, which passed the Indiana House unanimously and passed the Senate quickly and overwhelmingly, has the same USDA certification preferential purchasing plan and it also establishes a Biobased Commission to look for ways the State of Indiana can use and develop biobased products," says Representative Eric Koch, who introduced the bill. "Our goal is to make Indiana a center for biobased research, commercialization and use," he states.

Rep. Key says that while the Act was passed in 2005, there was little chance to really implement it up until now for two reasons. "We look to construction by the state of Arkansas to really jumpstart this initiative with things like biobased foam insulation and other construction materials. However, Arkansas did very little building in 2006, but we'll be doing more this year. Also, the fact that USDA is now expected to start issuing biobased certification of more product categories will help enormously," he points out.

From Key's own state of Arkansas, BioBased Systems, LLC. Director of Government Affairs Josh Hutchinson says, "We as a company are excited about this legislation and are actively supporting this idea in every state because the biobased markets such as insulation, carpet backing, and bio-chemicals, are really just starting to emerge and could grow to be as big as the biodiesel

movement. Legislation like this and the efforts of the USB that encourage and raise awareness about these products could dramatically improve the market for U.S. agriculture. We are excited about making foam products that are better for the end user, the environment, and the economy. Thankfully, the U.S. Government and states like Indiana and Arkansas have acknowledged these benefits and are doing something to help."