

International Association for Vegetation Science

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Resolution on Biofuels January 11, 2008

Whereas:

- Over the past few years, concern about global climate change and energy security has dramatically increased interest in biomass-derived energy,
- Almost all attention on biomass-derived energy has been focused on High-Input, Low-Diversity (HILD) systems, which have questionable sustainability and are susceptible to disease and crop failure,
- Low-Input, High-Diversity (LIHD) systems have not been explored as a source of biomass for energy, despite their possible advantages for global carbon balance,
- In some regions, LIHD systems have potential additional value for sustainability, plant and animal biodiversity, nature conservation, honey production, aesthetics, erosion control, and other benefits,
- Vegetation scientists have particular expertise on the productivity and sustainability of vegetation-derived biomass, and are thus especially qualified for addressing fundamental issues associated with biofuel production,
- Expenditures for Scientific Research on biofuels have expanded dramatically, but not for vegetation science,
- Increased production of HILD crops is threatening natural vegetation worldwide, and much of this vegetation is of high conservation value or provides valuable ecosystem services,

Therefore be it resolved that:

- We, the International Association for Vegetation Science, call upon scientific funding agencies to increase funding for basic and applied vegetation science,
- We call upon industry, government, and other institutions to avoid a strictly crop-based approach, and to consider LIHD production where appropriate,
- We call upon our own membership to remain mindful and vigilant that many of the natural communities we value and study may come under threat from strong pressure for HILD developments,
- We call upon our own membership to consider how its expertise can be used and mobilized to contribute to a global research program, in which alternatives to HILD are explored,
- And we call upon our own membership to communicate a balanced view of biomass-based fuels with stakeholders, including threats and opportunities associated with leading opportunities.