

HB 4109 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Department of Environmental Quality and State Forestry Department to study opportunities for state actions to promote carbon sequestration. Requires that the study evaluate opportunities to provide incentives to industries to engage in carbon sequestration and other carbon storage activities, and evaluate opportunities for capitalizing on carbon sequestration methods while also promoting economic development and long-term job creation within related market sectors. Requires that the study consider regional approaches, other than adopting or participating in a greenhouse gas cap-and-trade system, for reducing greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration. Requires the departments to submit a report to an interim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to natural resources by September 15, 2019. Sunsets act on January 2, 2020.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Carbon sequestration is the process by which atmospheric carbon dioxide is taken up by trees, grasses, and other plants through photosynthesis and stored as carbon in trunks, branches, foliage, roots, and soils. Both forests and grasslands commonly function as "carbon sinks," absorbing more carbon dioxide than they release. In addition to natural ecosystems' role in sequestering carbon, industrial methods such as Carbon Dioxide Capture and Sequestration (CCS) can also transfer atmospheric carbon dioxide into long-term storage. CCS is a set of technologies that capture and transfer compressed carbon dioxide from coal- and gas-fired power plants and large industrial sources, and inject it into deep, underground rock formations.

Carbon dioxide is among the primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere, along with water vapor, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone.