



**Senator Johnny Isakson: 'Peanuts to pine trees'  
*State translates resources into technology***

The state of Georgia has some of the most abundant resources in the world – everything from 'peanuts to pine trees' – and is using those resources to not only attract industry, but to develop and refine renewable energy technologies, according to Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA).

Isakson was on campus to attend Renewable Bioproducts Institute's inaugural symposium, "Renewable Bioproducts: Advances in Lignocellulosic Processes and Products," Oct. 1-2.

The senator praised Georgia Tech's leadership and research faculty for their continued commitment to utilizing the state's natural resources in seeking out new cutting-edge technology in the energy arena.

"Biomass and renewable energy, both critical to not only the state, but the entire country in looking toward the future," he said. "Everything is on the table when it comes to energy and this institution has been in the forefront of exploring options to make cleaner, sustainable energy."

Isakson said it is possible the United States could become a net exporter of energy, a goal the country's leaders should have in mind as they face the challenges of energy sourcing.

"There is no good reason in the world why a country with such natural resources and brain power isn't in a better position energy-wise, both here at home and globally," he said. "From existing methods like fracking and investing in the Keystone pipeline, to finding new technologies in the way we find and produce energy, there are endless possibilities.... We are sitting on a ham sandwich starving to death. The answers are right in front of us and people like you are ready to take us to those levels, but politics is getting in the way."

Another issue keeping companies from investing in more energy research and technologies is the U.S. tax code, according to Isakson. He'll be voting for tax extenders through 2015 because he said he believes they are directly tied to research and development.

"No matter what we do, what kind of incentives we try to put on the table, what kind of top-notch institutes we have, companies will continue to look for inversions because of our backward tax code," he said. "It is an insult to your intelligence for Congress not to pass these tax extenders. It hits everyone's pocketbook in some way, including Georgia Tech's."

“If we don’t do something soon, companies will continue to put their money in the bank and sit on it or they will put their money overseas. Either way, we all lose.”