

May 6, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee

The Honorable Joe Barton
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee

Dear Chairman Waxman and Ranking Member Barton:

As Congress considers energy and climate change legislation, we urge you to appropriately include renewable forest biomass as an energy source to meet a renewable electricity standard (RES) should one be adopted. Forest biomass is plentiful, carbon-neutral and essential to meet the RES standard, particularly in areas of the country that are not able to produce energy from other renewable sources, like wind and solar.

America's 425 million acres of private forestland are uniquely suited to help meet our nation's renewable energy needs. Renewable forest biomass from these lands could provide as much as one-third of the energy needed to meet an RES. The addition of biomass from hazardous fuels reduction and restoration projects on public lands increases the overall contribution of our nation's forests to our renewable energy goals. Overall, biomass harvesting from both public and private forests will make important and timely contribution to the health of our forests – improving wildlife habitat, aiding adaptation, and reducing catastrophic wildfires that emit millions of tons of CO₂ and other GHGs each year.

However, in order for renewable forest biomass to make a full contribution to an RES, legislation must provide an inclusive definition of biomass with appropriate measures to maintain sustainability and high conservation priority forests. Definitions, such as the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act, which significantly restrict the use of most renewable forest biomass, negate the many benefits of this critical energy source, including its contributions to lower carbon emissions, and jeopardize our renewable energy goals.

We support an approach to eligible forest biomass that:

- Includes renewable forest biomass from all forest types and ownerships
- Relies on forest practices established at the state and local level, rather than creating new federal mandates, land use zoning or overly complex definitions
- Defines sustainable practices using existing tools, such as state water quality Best Management Practices, with proven effectiveness
- Protects wildlife, water, soils and unique places through established and trusted public processes that rely on state and local knowledge and expertise
- Allows for forest-health related harvests from National Forests and BLM lands
- Studies the impact of the RES on forest resources at the landscape level and takes corrective measures if and when they are needed.

(continued)

While the undersigned have endorsed various approaches for addressing renewable biomass in an RES, all agree that it is essential that the definition ultimately adopted adheres to these principles. Such an approach will help meet our renewable energy needs, maintain forest sustainability and garner the support of a broad range of interests.

Sincerely,

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Adage

American Farm Bureau Federation

American Forest Foundation

American Forest Resource Council

American Loggers Council

Archery Trade Association

Associated California Loggers

Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho

Associated Oregon Loggers

Association of Consulting Foresters of America

Association of Equipment Manufacturers

Biomass Coordinating Council, American
Council On Renewable Energy

Boone and Crockett Club

California Forestry Association

Chesapeake Bay Commission

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Conservation Force

Dallas Safari Club

Deere & Company

Empire State Forest Products Association

Environmental and Energy Study Institute

Family Forest Foundation

Flathead Economic Policy Center

Forest Landowners Association

Hardwood Federation

Intermountain Forest Association

Kentucky Forest Industries Association

Komatsu Forest LLC

Louisiana Forestry Association

Michigan Association of Timbermen

Michigan Forest Products Council

Missouri Forest Products Association

Montana Logging Association

National Alliance of Forest Owners

National Association of Conservation Districts

National Association of Counties

National Association of Forest Service Retirees

National Association of State Foresters

National Association of University Forest
Resources Programs

National Cattleman's Beef Association

National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition

National Trappers Association

National Wild Turkey Federation

National Woodland Owners Association

North American Bear Foundation

Northern Arizona Loggers Association

Oregon Forest Industries Council

Oregon Small Woodlands Association

Professional Logging Contractors of Maine

Public Lands Council

Quality Deer Management Association

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Safari Club International

Society of American Foresters

South Carolina Forestry Association

Texas Forestry Association

Texas Wildlife Association

The Catch-A-Dream Foundation

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Tigercat Industries Inc.

Virginia Forest Products Association

Virginia Loggers Association

Washington Contract Loggers Association

Washington Farm Forestry Association

Washington Forest Protection Association

Wildlife Management Institute