

August 5, 2009

The Honorable Tom Harkin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

As the Senate considers renewable energy and climate change legislation, we urge you to appropriately include renewable forest biomass as a qualified resource to meet our nation's renewable energy and climate change goals. The House of Representatives recently passed H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which included language nearly identical to the 2008 Farm Bill definition of renewable biomass for private land. The definition of renewable biomass for federal lands in H.R. 2454, however, will exclude some of the biomass from much-needed restoration and forest health improvement projects. The renewable biomass definition in H.R. 2454 identifies the types of biomass qualifying for the Renewable Electricity Standard (RES), Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and other climate-related provisions. We recommend that a broad definition, such as the one included in H.R. 2454 for private lands, and language similar to the 2008 Farm Bill definition for federal lands with increased flexibility for restoration and forest health projects, be adopted for similar provisions in Senate legislation.

Forest biomass is plentiful, carbon-neutral and essential to meet our nation's renewable energy and climate objectives. It is especially indispensable if many portions of the country are to meet the requirements for the use of renewable sources of energy. Heavily forested regions of the country should be able to fully contribute to and benefit from the implementation of federal policy. The proper utilization of renewable forest biomass to meet energy and climate change needs will provide significant economic, environmental and social benefits to the country and bring timely aid to struggling rural economies.

America's private and public forests are uniquely suited to help meet our nation's renewable energy and climate needs. Renewable forest biomass from these lands could provide as much as one-third of the energy needed to meet an RES and could make significant contributions to the production of next generation transportation fuels. Sound management of our forests to provide biomass energy will also improve the overall carbon footprint of domestic energy supplies

while contributing to the long-term forest health and vitality – improving wildlife habitat, protecting water quality and reducing catastrophic wildfires that emit millions of tons of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases each year.

One of the goals of promoting renewable energy is to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy and replace them with domestic sources of clean, reliable energy. Critical to this objective is an inclusive definition of qualifying biomass that maintains a level playing field for market access across all feedstock sources and encompasses the full range of wood biomass, including trees and other plants, forest residuals and byproducts of manufacturing.

We look forward to working with you on a final policy that includes such a definition.

Sincerely,

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ADAGE

Alabama Forestry Association

American Forest Foundation

American Forest Resource Council

American Loggers Council

Arkansas Forestry 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

Black Hills Forest Resource Association

Catch-A-Dream Foundation

Colorado Timber Industry Association

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Deere & Company

Duke Energy

Enerkem

Entergy Corporation

Environmental Federation of Oklahoma

Family Forest Foundation

FirstEnergy Corporation

Florida Forestry Association

Forest Landowners Association

Frontier Renewable Resources

Georgia Forestry Association

Hardwood Federation

Intermountain Forest Association

Kentucky Forest Industries Association

Loggy Bayou Timber Company, LLC
Louisiana Forestry Association
Michigan Association of Timbermen
Michigan Forest Products Council
Mississippi Biomass and Renewable Energy Council
Mississippi Loggers Association
Montana Logging Association
Mule Deer Foundation
N.C. Association of Professional Loggers, Inc.
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 Wild Turkey Federation
National Woodland Owners Association
North American Bear Foundation
North Carolina Forestry Association
Northern Arizona Loggers Association
Oklahoma Forestry Association
Oregon Forest Industries Council
Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Professional Logging Contractors of Maine
Range Fuels
Reaves Timber
Reiver Forest Products of Houston Texas
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Shull Timber Corporation
Society of American Foresters
South Carolina Forestry Association
Sustainable Solutions Georgia
Texas Forestry Association
Texas Wildlife Association
The Maine Forest Products Council
Vermont Forest Products Association
Vermont Woodlands Association
Virginia Forest Products Association
Virginia Loggers Association
Washington Contract Loggers Association
Washington Farm Forestry Association
Washington Forest Protection Association
West Virginia Forestry Association
Woodlands Carbon Company
Xcel Energy