

October 13, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We are writing to thank you for your leadership in advancing a sustainable renewable energy policy, responsible land management, and rural America through a broad definition for renewable forest biomass in energy and climate policy. We particularly appreciate your support of a definition similar to that of the 2008 Farm Bill that would provide full market participation for biomass from private and public forest lands while including biomass from federal lands that conforms to federal law and forest plans.

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 a significant portion of the energy needed to meet an RES and could make substantial 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.

As Congress moves forward on energy and climate change legislation, and the Administration participates in COP-15, we look forward to working with you to promote a broad definition of renewable forest biomass in federal policy.

Sincerely,

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ADAGE
Alabama Forestry Association
American Forest Foundation
American Forest Resource Council
American Loggers Council
Arkansas Forestry Association
Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho
Associated Oregon Loggers

Association of Consulting Foresters of
America
Avista
Biomass Coordinating Council, American
Council On Renewable Energy
Black Hills Forest Resource Association
Boone & Crockett Club
California Forestry Association
Catch-A-Dream Foundation

Colorado Timber Industry Association
Deere & Company
Empire State Forest Products Association
Entergy Corporation
Florida Forestry Association
Forest Landowners Association
Georgia Forestry Association
Intermountain Forest Association
Louisiana Forestry Association
Michigan Association of Timbermen
Michigan Forest Products Council
Mississippi Biomass and Renewable Energy
Council
Montana Logging Association
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Counties
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest
Resource Programs
National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition
National Wild Turkey Federation
North Carolina Forestry Association

Northern Arizona Loggers Association
NorthWestern Energy
Oregon Forest Industries Council
Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Otoka Energy
Reaves Timber
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Shull Timber Corporation
Society of American Foresters
South Carolina Forestry Association
Sustainable Solutions Georgia
Tennessee Forestry Association
Texas Forestry Association
The Biomass Power Association
Virginia Forest Products Association
Virginia Loggers Association
Washington Contract Loggers Association
Washington Forest Protection Association
Washington Friends of Farms & Forest
Woodlands Carbon Company
Xcel Energy