

BIOMASS UPDATE



Biomass Update 2: Woody Biomass and Forest Sustainability

Contents:

- More Biomass Can Mean Fewer Trees
- New Reports
- News Clips
- Community Letters to the Senate and EPA

“There is concern over the potential effects on forests from meeting existing and proposed mandates for bioenergy and biofuels that could potentially require more than doubling the current level of wood harvesting in the U.S.”
[-“Forest Sustainability in the Development of Wood Bioenergy in the U.S.” The Pinchot Institute and the Heinz Center, June 2010](#)

More Biomass Can Mean Fewer Trees:

Our forests have the potential to play a positive role in our nation’s energy future. But care needs to be taken to ensure that result. From [the Manomet Center’s recent report](#) detailing the large spectrum of emissions profiles when our forests are burned for energy – and thus showing that not all biomass is carbon neutral – to the above study from the Pinchot Institute and the Heinz Center on forest sustainability, it is clear that biomass’ future depends on science-based policymaking.

Under current practices, significantly expanding the use of biomass will require significantly increasing the number of trees cut. Already, [98.5% of wood residues are being utilized](#), meaning expansion will require moving to whole trees. And estimates show that when using biomass in order to meet a 25% RFS and RES by 2025, [approximately 45% of the material will come from roundwood](#) – otherwise known as new trees and more than double today’s harvest. This expansion will put additional strains on our forests, affecting long-term forest health, biodiversity, and the other services our forests provide, such as clean water.

Combined with Manomet’s results that carbon neutrality is only achieved over an extended time period, proper sustainability guidelines and accounting measures are a necessary component of biomass’ future role. These pieces are a critical part of ensuring the long-term health of our forests and that our renewable energy sources actually reduce our country’s greenhouse gas emissions.

New Reports:

[“Forest Sustainability in the Development of Wood Bioenergy in the U.S.”](#)

The Pinchot Institute and The Heinz Center

Release date: June 2010

[“Massachusetts Biomass Sustainability and Carbon Policy Study: Report to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources.”](#)

Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences.

Release Date: June 2010.

News Clips:

Washington Post: [“Considerations for Factoring Biomass into Clean Energy”](#)

Editorial; July 5, 2010

[Massachusetts amends biomass regulations in light of Manomet study](#)

State of Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Letters to the Senate and EPA:

Last week, two letters were sent from environmental organizations voicing our support for including biomass facilities in the EPA’s Tailoring Rule to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. Both letters can be found on [The Wilderness Society’s website.](#)