BIOMASS POWER ASSOCIATION

Natural Energy, Naturally

What is Biomass Power?

Biomass power is carbon neutral electricity generated from renewable organic waste that would otherwise be dumped in landfills, openly burned, or left as fodder for forest fires.

Environmental Benefit

Biomass power uses waste material such as scrap lumber, forest debris, or agricultural harvest waste to generate clean electricity. If not utilized as renewable fuel, it is often discarded in landfills or contributes to forest fires.

- The biomass power industry prevents over 30 million tons of organic waste a year from being dumped in landfills or left to decay in the open and slowly emit methane gas and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
- The biomass power industry removes 68.8 million tons of forest waste annually, improving forest health and dramatically reducing the threat of forest fires.
- Biomass power does not threaten forests. It is not economically viable for biomass plants to clear forests or chop down trees solely for the purpose of converting the wood to electricity.
- Waste byproducts from other industries are the only economically viable fuel for biomass power.

Climate Change Benefit

Biomass power generates clean, renewable, and sustainable electricity while eliminating harmful methane gases and reducing carbon emissions by 15.2 million tons each year.

- Biomass power is a renewable energy source that reduces greenhouse gases.
- Biomass uses only existing carbon and adds no new carbon to the atmosphere, making it carbon neutral.
- Organic waste naturally emits methane gas, but the biomass energy-making process eliminates the harmful methane gas before it enters the atmosphere.
- Biomass reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 15.2 million tons annually, while diverting over 30 million tons of organic material that would otherwise decompose.

Economic Benefit

Biomass power is essential to meeting strong renewable electricity standards in all fifty states and will create thousands of new green jobs.

- Biomass power is an expanding $1 billion industry with 80 facilities in 20 states.
- Biomass offers the greatest potential of any renewable energy source to help all states meet the requirements of an aggressive national renewable electricity standard.
- America's biomass industry provides 18,000 jobs nationwide, many of which are in rural areas.
- Unlike wind and solar power, biomass can produce electricity 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, which provides a steady and dependable flow of power to any local electricity grid.
- Biomass is the most economically efficient renewable electricity source, costing on average between 6 and 7 cents per kilowatt hour.

Rural America Benefit

Biomass power plants are predominately located in rural communities providing thousands of jobs and millions in revenue to areas that are often economically depressed.

- Each biomass power plant contributes about $8 to $14 million annually to the local communities where they operate in payroll, purchases and property tax revenue.
- A typical biomass power facility will provide two jobs for each megawatt of plant capacity.
- Biomass power facilities are currently operating in rural areas like Ashland, ME, Dillard, OR, South Bay, FL, Lake Charles, LA, and Glenwood, AR.

STATE	PLANTS	ECONOMIC VALUE
Arizona	1	$12 million
Arkansas	1	$12 million
California	30	$360 million
Florida	2	$24 million
Idaho	2	$24 million
Louisiana	1	$12 million
Maine	9	$108 million
Massachusetts	1	$12 million
Michigan	6	$72 million

STATE	PLANTS	ECONOMIC VALUE
Minnesota	3	$36 million
New Hampshire	6	$96 million
New York	2	$24 million
North Carolina	1	$12 million
Oregon	8	$72 million
Pennsylvania	1	$12 million
Vermont	2	$24 million
Washington	4	$48 million

What Can Congress Do To Promote Biomass?

Congress should not pick winners and losers in the renewable energy industry by supporting legislation that selectively increases taxes on biomass power, resulting in less energy and lost jobs.

- Under the current production tax credit, biomass power is taxed at twice the rate of competing renewables like wind and geothermal, leaving biomass at an extreme competitive disadvantage.
- Congress should provide tax equity or "parity" in the production tax credit to level the playing field in the renewable sector.

Congress should extend the production tax credit for existing biomass plants that is set to expire this December.

- If Congress allows these crucial tax credits to expire in December 2009, the biomass industry and the "green" electricity it provides will be put at serious risk.

Biomass power is a clean and abundant source of electricity that will allow states to pursue even more aggressive goals for increasing their use of renewable energy in the future.

- Because wind and solar power are not reliable or sustainable energy sources for many southeastern states, biomass is the most important near-term option for meeting a national renewable electricity standard.
- Southeastern states cannot meet aggressive renewable electricity standards without biomass.
- Biomass power is available 24-7, not just when the sun shines or the wind blows.
- Biomass is an abundant, renewable source of electricity in the United States that is technologically mature and ready to be tapped, especially in the southeastern states where it is needed most.