

2012 Farm Bill Energy Program Support Letter

April 18, 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts
U.S. Senate
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts:

As the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee begins to develop the 2012 Farm Bill, the undersigned organizations strongly support retention of a robust Energy Title to promote renewable energy production in America. We believe that rural America in particular is uniquely positioned to provide home grown energy solutions and that providing targeted assistance to businesses and entrepreneurs will benefit both the economy and the environment. Farm Bill energy programs have a proven track record of promoting innovation and helping our nation meet its renewable energy objectives. Equally important is that these programs have helped companies create and retain jobs in primarily rural, economically distressed areas.

The undersigned organizations represent the range of energy pathways that utilize biomass to heat and cool buildings, make electrical power or produce liquid transportation fuels. The benefits of biomass-based energy are considerable. Unlike some other renewable technologies, biomass based energy is base load and proven. In addition to providing a virtually infinite supply of homegrown energy, the carbon uptake during the continuous growth cycle for biomass minimizes the overall carbon impact of our fuels. Moreover, increased reliance on biomass as an energy solution will create additional markets for rural landowners and those dependent on National forests for supply. These markets will in turn provide needed incentives for landowners to maintain their working forests and agricultural landscapes and resist the pressure to convert these lands to other non-growing uses such as development. Growing markets for biomass will also facilitate restoration of public forests which will drive economic development in public-land communities.

The opportunity for Congress to show strong leadership in the area of renewable energy is before us in this year's Farm Bill. The undersigned organizations believe it is paramount that the Committee produce a bill that has meaningful mandatory funding for key programs including REAP, Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels, Biorefinery Assistance and Repowering Assistance programs and the Community Wood Energy Program. Such programs should provide the flexibility necessary to promote innovation and allow rural businesses to make best use of the available funding.

In addition to spurring renewable energy generation and related environmental benefits, a Farm Bill with a strong energy focus can be the vehicle that delivers sustained economic growth and job creation in rural America.

We thank the Committee for its leadership and look forward to working with you in the coming months as you fashion this critical legislation.

Supporting Organizations

25x25 Alliance	Lake County Resources Initiative
AFS Energy Systems	Life Science Alley
American Agricultural Movement, Inc.	Maine Pellet Fuels Association
American Biomass Corporation	National Alliance of Forest Owners
American Boiler Manufacturers Association	National Association of Forest Service Retirees
American Wood Fibers	New England Wood Pellet
Andrews Kurth LLP	New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association
Area Partnership for Economic Expansion	New York Biomass Energy Alliance
Bear Mountain Forest Products	Pellet Fuels Institute
Biobusiness Alliance of Minnesota	Pennsylvania Biomass Energy Association
Biomass Combustion Systems, Inc.	Repreve Renewables
Biomass Coordinating Council of ACORE	Resource Professionals Group
Biomass Energy Resource Center	Shoshone County Board of Commissioners
Biomass Power Association	Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative
Biomass Thermal Energy Council	Sustainable Northwest
Cambridge Environmental Technologies	Tarm Biomass
Chip Energy, Inc.	Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association
Concord Steam Corporation	The Catskill Forest Association
DVO Anaerobic Digesters	Viessmann Manufacturing Company
Empire State Forest Products Association	Wagner Forest Management
Energy and Environmental Studies Institute	Woodpellets.com
Forest Energy Corporation	
Framing our Community, Inc.	
Innovative Natural Resource Solutions	
International District Energy Association	