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July 10, 2012

The Honorable Frank Lucas  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Rayburn House Office Building, Room: 2311  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Rayburn House Office Building, Room: 2211  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson:

As the House Agriculture Committee begins consideration of the 2012 Farm Bill, the Biomass Thermal Energy Council (BTEC) urges the Committee to preserve a robust Energy Title to promote renewable energy production in America. BTEC is a nationwide industry association representing the views of nearly 100 biomass feedstock producers, fuel refiners, appliance manufacturers, vendors, non-profits, and end users. Through consumer education and industry outreach, BTEC seeks to advance the market for biomass thermal energy and promote the use of high efficiency products and locally produced renewable biomass.

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 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 and reduce destruction from forest fires.

BTEC urges the Committee to produce a bill that has meaningful funding for key programs including REAP, Bioenergy Program for Advanced Biofuels 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 as you fashion this critical legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Seymour". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joseph Seymour  
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