



April 8, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dan Whiting
(202) 367-1222

BCAP's Investment in the Forest Biomass Supply Chain is Critically Needed

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) told the U.S. Department of Agriculture today that it fully supports the Biomass Crop Assistance Program's (BCAP) goal of developing the infrastructure and jobs necessary to enable the forest biomass supply chain to efficiently move forest biomass to biomass energy facilities. The statement was part of NAFO's official comments on the proposed rule for the BCAP.

The BCAP is important because it supports energy from renewable forest biomass, which is sustainable, domestic, renewable, and, according to the EPA, does not increase CO₂ in the air if used sustainably.ⁱ Additionally, it is a vital component to our nation's energy security goals, with projections that it will be required to meet as much as one-third of a renewable electricity standard.

"BCAP's investment in the forest biomass supply chain is critically needed and will help establish the infrastructure and associated jobs necessary to support the growing renewable energy sector," noted David P. Tenny, President and CEO of NAFO.

"Historically, there have been limited market opportunities for forest-derived biomass. As a result, the supply chain supporting this material is relatively immature and fragmented compared to its potential. Through BCAP investments, we can develop this critical infrastructure, build jobs in rural communities, and position our nation to produce more renewable energy in a sustainable and cost-effective manner."

NAFO members that participated in the BCAP's 2009 Collection, Harvest, Storage, and Transportation (CHST) Matching Payment Program report that the program has in many instances helped accelerate the development of critical infrastructure and jobs in the biomass supply chain, thereby improving the ability of eligible material owners to produce and deliver forest biomass to conversion facilities.

Tenny added, "We have noted and applaud USDA's leadership in seeking ways to revitalize rural economies. Based on our early experiences with BCAP, we believe that by working with USDA to focus the program on building infrastructure and jobs between forests and facilities we can achieve the purposes of the BCAP program as outlined by Congress while providing significant benefits to rural communities that are struggling through difficult economic times."

[MORE]

The manner by which USDA finalizes and implements the BCAP regulations will be critical to whether these goals ultimately are achieved. NAFO's recommendations for improving the CHST portion of the BCAP program focus on four general areas: (1) adhering to a broad definition of renewable biomass; (2) ensuring that an appropriate range of forest-derived biomass is eligible under the program; (3) maintaining proposed rules' requirements for conservation plans, forest stewardship plans, or equivalent plans; and (4) guaranteeing fair treatment of applicants, in both the existing and prospective CHST program.

NAFO also recommends that the final rule should enable biomass conversion facilities to recoup certain costs associated with participating in the BCAP program, and that the final rule should not arbitrarily exclude any private forests from participating in the program.

NAFO's full comments are available at www.nafoalliance.org in addition to two papers on the sustainability of private U.S. forests: *NAFO's Advocacy Position on Sustainability* and *Environmental Regulation of Private Forests in the U.S.*

###

NAFO is an organization of private forest owners committed to advancing federal policies that promote the economic and environmental values of privately-owned forests at the national level. NAFO membership encompasses more than 75 million acres of private forestland in 47 states. To see the economic impact of America's working forests, visit www.nafoalliance.org/economic-impact-report.

ⁱ U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Combined Heat and Power Partnership. *Biomass Combined Heat and Power Catalog of Technologies*, 96 (Sept. 2007) available at www.epa.gov/chp/documents/biomass_chp_catalog.pdf.