



February 5, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dan Whiting
(202) 367-1222

NAFO Urges Congress to Expand Use of Forest Biomass for Biofuels *Changes in the law needed to fully implement the Federal Renewable Fuel Standard*

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) today praised the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for its efforts to include forest biomass as a source of transportation fuels in its final rule implementing the Federal Renewable Fuel Standard, and called upon Congress to fix the flawed definition in the Standard excluding most renewable forest biomass from the program.

David P. Tenny, President and CEO of NAFO, said, “The EPA has taken positive steps to enable forest owners to participate in the renewable transportation fuel market. Unfortunately, the agency’s hands are tied under a statutory definition of biomass disqualifying as much as 90% of our nation’s private forests from contributing. This policy forfeits the carbon benefits of transportation fuels made from renewable forest biomass, which reduce carbon emissions by over ninety percent compared to gasoline.”

Sustainable working forests are a primary tool to reduce GHG emissions, as recognized by the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC states, “In the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fiber or energy from the forest, will generate the greatest mitigation benefit.”

NAFO urged Congress to adopt a more inclusive definition of renewable forest biomass, such as that appearing in the House passed American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 in place of the overly narrow approach taken in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, which established the Renewable Fuel Standard. There are presently at least four different definitions of qualifying forest biomass in federal statute, adding complexity, confusion and cost to implementing federal policy and reducing the resulting environmental benefits, including benefits to forests from new investment in quality forest management.

Tenny stressed, “By excluding private forests as a part of our nation’s renewable energy strategy, the EISA biomass definition forecloses a critical part of the solution to reducing our dependence on foreign, high carbon sources of fuel. That hurts the quality of our air, the energy independence of our nation and the ability of forest owners to invest in the long term health of their forests.”

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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.