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## **163 Organizations Ask EPA to Support Renewable Forest Biomass Energy**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – 163 organizations from a variety of interests across the United States sent a letter to Lisa Jackson, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), urging her to recognize the carbon benefits of biomass energy by affirming EPA's long-standing policy that combustion of biomass for energy does not increase carbon in the atmosphere when done sustainably. The EPA's final Prevention of Significant Deterioration and Title V Greenhouse Gas Tailoring Rule (Tailoring Rule) departed unexpectedly from established policy by treating greenhouse gas emissions from the combustion of biomass the same as such emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels.

"EPA's action was a sudden shift in direction that appeared to ignore the treatment of biomass energy cited in the draft rule," said David P. Tenny, President and CEO of the National Alliance of Forest Owners. "We were surprised along with many others that EPA would place renewable biomass, which plays such a fundamental role in moving our nation toward a more reliable supply of domestic, low carbon renewable energy, in the same category as coal, oil and other non-renewable, high carbon fuel sources."

The letter explains how biogenic carbon emissions, in contrast to fossil fuels, are part of the natural carbon cycle, "Biogenic carbon is part of a relatively rapid natural carbon cycle. Trees and other plants absorb carbon as they grow. Combustion of harvested biomass for energy releases previously stored carbon back into the atmosphere, which the growing biomass re-absorbs. Where national data show stable or increasing carbon stocks in forests and agricultural lands, as in the United States, the result is no net increase of carbon in the atmosphere. . . EPA and other federal agencies have recognized the carbon neutrality of biomass emissions for many years." The letter also points out that, "EPA's Renewable Fuel Standard 2 demonstrates there are additional benefits associated with biomass throughout the lifecycle compared to fossil fuels."

"We have reached an important juncture when our nation is deciding its energy future. An important part of that decision is identifying the energy sources that will make us more independent and sustainable for the long run," Tenny said. "Now is the time for EPA and others in government to firmly establish biomass as one of the critical paths to the future and work cooperatively with the biomass community to make that future a reality. The confusion created by the EPA's Tailoring Rule is a significant step backward and puts the biomass community at risk of erroneously being cast as part of the problem rather than part of the solution."

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The EPA must act quickly so we can resume forward progress rather than unnecessarily spinning our wheels over an already settled area of policy.”

The cosigners remind Jackson that the forest products industry supplies 65% of its own energy needs with renewable biomass and that the, “unprecedented step of equating biomass carbon emissions with fossil fuel carbon emissions. . . threatens to chill investment in varieties of trees, grasses and other plants that could be purpose-grown for energy production. This will frustrate the environmental goals of shifting to renewable energy.” The cosigners **also** ask Jackson for an expeditious, “public review of biogenic carbon neutrality and its role under the Clean Air Act using as its baseline the long-standing positions of EPA and other federal agencies,” and to, “suspend application of greenhouse gas emission regulation to facilities with biomass combustion until this review has been completed.”

The full letter, including all 163 cosigners, is available on NAFO’s website.

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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](http://www.nafoalliance.org/economic-impact-report).

The carbon benefits and sustainability of energy from renewable forest biomass is documented in recent white papers available on NAFO’s website at [www.nafoalliance.org/studies](http://www.nafoalliance.org/studies).