



For Immediate Release: June 11, 2010

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Biomass Power Association CEO on Manomet Study: Assertion that Biomass Less Carbon Friendly than Coal is Inaccurate, Misleading

WASHINGTON, DC – Bob Cleaves, President and CEO of the Biomass Power Association (BPA), the nation’s leading association of biomass power companies, issued the following statement on a press conference call this morning to address a misleading report on biomass released yesterday by the State of Massachusetts.

Cleaves remarked, “We want to emphasize to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that our industry is proud of its accomplishments. We want the Commonwealth and Manomet to issue a statement immediately recognizing that this study is not about waste wood and waste materials and organic residues that are not generated solely for the purpose of producing energy. And we look forward to working with the Patrick administration to look at their existing regulatory structure and if changes are needed with that structure then we welcome that dialogue, but to issue a statement and issue a study like was done yesterday and boldly assert that biomass is less carbon friendly than coal is flatly misleading, irresponsible and not an accurate portrayal of our industry.”

Below is Cleaves’ full statement:

“The biomass study released yesterday in Massachusetts is of grave concern to my members who do business in twenty states and employ approximately 18,000 people in this country. The report issued by Manomet on behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts yesterday has generated both a lot of interest but also a tremendous amount of confusion and misinformation about a very, very important issue for our industry and that is the carbon impacts from utilizing biomass in the production of electricity.

“As a result of that, my industry wants to make very clear four very distinct principles that guide us in what we do and how we do it:

- First, we believe in using sustainable biomass fuels that do not contribute to land use changes and offer much lower life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions than traditional fossil fuels.
- Second, **we do not promote the harvesting of forests for the purpose of producing energy.** The residues generated from forest harvesting, however, play an important role in combating climate change and generating renewable energy.
- Third, we fully support the use of woody wastes and byproducts derived from sustainable forestry slash, unused residues from mill operations and forest thinnings removed either to reduce forest fire risk or to allow select trees to attain merchantable sizes more quickly.
- And fourth, we also fully support non forestry waste from the agriculture industry whether that's generated from rice mills, sugar cane debris, orchard and agricultural prunings and other biogenic materials that would otherwise be discarded.

“The report unfortunately, completely ignores these fuels in the first 109 pages of the report and it's not until page 110, almost an afterthought, recognizes the fact, ‘All bioenergy technologies, even biomass electric power compared to natural gas electric, look favorable when biomass waste-wood is compared to fossil fuel alternatives.’

“Instead, let's be very clear about what this study is about. This study is an analysis of what is available for fuel in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a state that, unlike others parts of the country, does not have a significant forest products industry and therefore may have resources different from other parts of the country where my companies do business. It assumes, we think, that in order to support the growth initiative that's been announced in Massachusetts, that the chopping of trees has to occur to produce an adequate amount of fuel to support these facilities. But that is a different kind of fuel than the fuel relied upon by the 18,000 hard-working men and women who go to work every day and produce green, renewable energy for this country.

“We want to emphasize to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that our industry is proud of its accomplishments. We want the Commonwealth and Manomet to issue a statement immediately recognizing that this study is not about waste wood and waste materials and organic residues that are not generated solely for the purpose of producing energy. And we look forward to working with the Patrick administration to look at their existing regulatory structure and if changes are needed with that structure then we welcome that dialogue, but to issue a statement and issue a study like was done yesterday and boldly assert that biomass is less carbon friendly than coal is flatly misleading, irresponsible and not an accurate portrayal of our industry.”

Biomass power is a \$1 billion industry with 80 facilities in 20 states and provides over 18,000 jobs nationwide. Power plants are predominately located in rural communities, creating thousands of jobs and producing millions in revenue for

small towns. Biomass power is a clean and abundant source of electricity that will allow states to pursue even more aggressive goals for increasing their use of renewable energy in the future.

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The Biomass Power Association is a member-driven organization with the goal of increasing the use of biomass power and creating new jobs and opportunities in the biomass industry. As policymakers at every level explore ways to lower greenhouse gases and reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, BPA is the leading advocate at the state and federal level for a strong commitment to clean, renewable biomass energy. Members include local owners and operators of existing biomass facilities, suppliers, plant developers and others all across the U.S. For more information please visit www.BiomassPowerAssociation.org.

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