



1211 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 600 • Washington, DC 20036-2701
202-596-3974 tel • 202-223-5537 fax • info@biomassthermal.org

**Comments from the Biomass Thermal Energy Council to the Biomass Research and Development
Technical Advisory Committee**

August 23, 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Biomass Research and Development Technical Advisory Committee. I'm Joseph Seymour, Executive Director of the Biomass Thermal Energy Council (BTEC). 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

BRDI is an important program with a critical focus on new and emerging technologies and processes that will help deliver new sources of renewable energy to American consumers.

While focusing on new technologies, feedstock delivery systems and processes is important, BTEC would like to see the program place more emphasis on proven energy systems. The primary pathways that appear to be the focus of BRDI grants are biomass to electric and biomass to liquid transportation fuels.

What we believe is largely overlooked not only in BRDI but in our overall federal energy policy is the third pathway—thermal—which comprises a third of our nation's energy use. As the Committee well knows, capturing and using useful thermal energy from biomass combustion delivers benefits across the economic and environmental spectrum. In fact, during the 2011 winter season, biomass heating fuels such as pellets and wood chips were approximately half the cost of heating oil per unit of energy.

Biomass thermal energy systems are grounded in a proven technology that exists today. What's keeping these systems from further penetrating the marketplace and realizing their full potential—and replacing high cost fossil fuels now used to heat homes and businesses—is lack of awareness and upfront cost of conversion.

We believe that strategic investment in BRDI grant dollars in a community scale biomass heating cluster, for example, would serve to raise awareness of the tremendous cost and efficiency benefits of biomass thermal technologies. This investment would be a critical first step. Coupling BRDI with investment in a demonstration project with investment tax credits, which we are now pursuing in Congress, would push us through to the next level where bulk biomass feedstock delivery infrastructure would take shape and proliferate to serve the increasing number of biomass thermal system users.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any comments or clarifying questions, please contact me with the information provided below.

Joseph Seymour
Executive Director
Biomass Thermal Energy Council
Tel: 202-596-3974, x302
joseph.seymour@biomassthermal.org
www.biomassthermal.org