



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

July 26, 2013

House Energy and Commerce Committee

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20003

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member,

The Biomass Thermal Energy Council (BTEC) appreciates the opportunity to provide the House Energy and Commerce Committee with input regarding the committee's continuing discussion on the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). BTEC is an association of biomass fuel producers, forest landowners, appliance manufacturers, and related organizations that view biomass thermal energy as a renewable and efficient pathway to meeting America's energy needs. BTEC engages in research, education and public advocacy for the biomass thermal energy sector.

BTEC is encouraged by the recent dialogue occurring in the House Energy and Commerce Committee on the RFS and opportunities to reform the program to better align its requirements with its goals. While many aspects of the committee's White Papers series have been constructive in addressing the RFS's flaws, like RIN fraud, the White Papers fail to address the restrictive energy definition of the RFS itself. This myopic definition is detrimental to America's energy evolution. By only encompassing transportation fuels into the RFS regulatory mechanisms, the program is neglecting an equally important part of America's energy consumption; thermal energy. Thermal energy constitutes approximately one-third of America's energy consumption, opposite power and transportation. Through the inclusion of renewable fuels for thermal use—in addition to transportation—, the RFS could displace billions of gallons of often imported fossil fuels used for heating, like #2 heating oil and diesel fuel.

In fact, biomass used for thermal energy production is already acknowledged as an advanced biofuel in other federal programs. In Section 9005 of the current Farm Bill, the production of wood pellets receives recognition alongside biogas and ethanol. Further, in 2012, the Environmental Protection Agency attempted to amend the RFS section of the Clean Air Act to expand the scope of the RIN and the benefits of the RFS to include thermal energy from liquid biofuels. While much of the committee's focus has centered on the biofuels industry's difficulties in reaching RFS production mandates, the biomass thermal industry has been producing heating fuels that cost up to 50% less than heating oil and are able to greatly expand.

Ensuring policy parity between energy sources will grant biomass the opportunity to economically displace volatile and environmentally detrimental fossil fuels, while also producing jobs and building up rural and urban economies. Recent economic analyses demonstrate that biomass thermal fuels and technologies have the ability to displace 1.12 billion gallons of heating oil in the Northeastern U.S.,¹ as well as create as many as 210,000 jobs in the Midwest.² These benefits, and more, can only be achieved if biomass used for thermal energy is granted the same kind of regulatory recognition as other energy forms.

Biomass has a legitimate opportunity to help the nation taper off of its dangerous reliance on fossil fuels, often from hostile countries, and build a new energy policy that pushes America yet again to the forefront of economic

¹ "Heating the Northeast with Renewable Biomass: A bold vision for 2025," April 2010,
<http://biomassthermal.org/resource/2025vision.asp>

² "Heating the Midwest with Renewable Biomass: A Midwest vision for 2025," April 2013,
http://biomassthermal.org/resource/2025vision_mw.asp

progress. It is for this reason that BTEC urges this committee to consider including renewable biomass fuels used for thermal energy within the RFS.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Seymour". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joseph Seymour
Executive Director
Biomass Thermal Energy Council
202-596-3974
Joseph.seymour@biomassthermal.org