

June 8, 2015

Senator Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden,

On behalf of the national non-profit Biomass Thermal Energy Council (BTEC) and its 136 members, I commend you for your strong, clear and consistent leadership as a champion of biomass thermal policy. Today, we would like to express our appreciation for your introduction of the Bioenergy Act of 2015, S. 1294— bold, sensible legislation that establishes research and development efforts in the heating space and corrects a long-standing imbalance in the Federal approach towards bioenergy. We also value the call for smart collaboration, from the federal agency to local levels, beginning with progressive efforts and outreach from the Department of Energy and the Department of Agriculture.

The Council's leadership acknowledges the following components of the Bioenergy Act of 2015 in particular as key building blocks of fair, forward-thinking energy policies for heating:

- *Heat emphasis*—We are pleased that the bill prioritizes “heat”, at the same importance of electricity, given the absent Federal policy action toward heat’s critical role within national energy demand. The bill’s theme of catalyzing heat markets through applied research, real-world demonstration and encouragement of “what works” is the right blend of thought and action to create new opportunities in heating markets.
- *Bioheat*—The Council values the Act’s emphasis on bioheat, “woody biomass to generate heat”, among the strongest examples in the 114th Congress highlighting the role and value of healthy, efficient and secure wood heating in communities nation-wide. This distinction is often overlooked in Federal policy discussions around bio-based products, regardless of biomass thermal’s proven benefits across the portfolio of the country’s economic and social needs.
- *Federal, State and local collaboration*—Our leadership praises the bill’s directive to foster close, productive working relationships between the Department of Energy and Department of Agriculture, while underscoring their critical role as a catalyst across the Federal, State and Local levels. We appreciate the Act’s recognition of the need for bridging all levels through promoting State Wood Energy Teams nation-wide, thereby delivering on the promise of grassroots initiatives for thermal-led projects.
- *Funding Levels*—Finally, the Council thanks your office for establishing the appropriate funding levels for bioheat, ensuring that this legislation capitalizes on a long-standing opportunity to make good on the potential for bio-heat in the communities where these projects make the most difference.

Seeing the Bioenergy Act of 2015 in the broader context of comprehensive energy legislation in general and complementary legislation in particular, including Senator King’s Biomass Thermal Utilization Act of 2015, S. 727, we are heartened by renewed commitment to ensuring that the biomass thermal pathway remains in the national focus. The Council pledges our support in building momentum for the bill this session. If we can be of help, I leave my contact information below; we look forward to working with you and staff.



1211 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 650 • Washington, DC 20036-2701
202-596-3974 tel • 202-223-5537 fax • info@biomassthermal.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joseph Seymour", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

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

CC: Andrew Haden, Founder and President, Wisewood
Bob Sourek, Founder and CEO, Bear Mountain Forest Products
Bruce Daucsavage, President, Ochoco Lumber Company
David Smith, Instructor Renewable Materials, Department of Wood Science and Engineering,
Oregon State University
Dylan Kruse, Policy Director, Sustainable Northwest
Marcus Kauffman, Biomass Resource Specialist, Oregon Department of Forestry
Tom Miles, Principal, T.R.Miles Technical Consultants