



Issue Brief



Carbon Neutral Forest Based Biomass

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Why Carbon Neutrality Matters

- The concept of biomass carbon neutrality, recognized as scientifically valid around the world, is the bedrock of the forest products industry's sustainability claims.
- Regulatory uncertainty around how or whether carbon emissions from biomass combustion will be counted threatens the viability of the forestry, forest products and bioenergy sectors.
- Well managed forestlands provide for clean air, forest products, and biomass energy. This cycle is repeated through renewal of forestlands that are more abundant in the U.S. than in 1952.

Why FRA Supports Biomass Carbon Neutrality:

The concept of biomass carbon neutrality (net zero carbon emissions) is grounded in the fact that carbon emissions from biomass combustion are fully offset by working forest landscapes that continually absorb carbon from the atmosphere. It is a basic cycle of growth, combustion and regrowth. What drives this cycle is the forest products industry's commitment to sustainability. Because of the ongoing efforts of our sector, there are more trees in the U.S. today than there were in 1952. In fact, forest volume has expanded in the U.S. over that time frame because of sustainable forest management that includes growing and maintaining healthy forests, sustainable harvesting to make renewable forest products and bioenergy, and replanting and regeneration to renew the cycle.

The carbon neutral nature of biomass harvested from sustainably-managed forests has been recognized repeatedly by studies, government agencies, institutions, legislation and rules around the world, including guidance from the United Nations (UN) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the reporting protocols of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Request: Maintain existing statutory directive that federal agencies recognize the carbon neutrality of forest-based biomass in any final FY 2020 appropriations legislation:

FRA strongly supports a provision originally enacted as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017 that directs the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy and the Department of Agriculture to implement a coordinated policy that fully reflects the carbon neutral nature of forest-based biomass fuels and energy. Codifying the concept of biomass carbon neutrality was a considerable victory for every link in the biomass value chain. However, since the biomass provision was included in an appropriations measure, the language is in jeopardy of expiring if not explicitly reauthorized. With this in mind, FRA respectfully requests support for legislative language reauthorizing the biomass provision for fiscal year 2020.

About FRA

The Forest Resources Association (FRA) represents the interests of nearly 300 organizations and businesses in the forest products industry. Our members include forest landowners, suppliers, consuming mills, associated businesses, and state forestry associations. FRA members are represented in 48 states and 320 Congressional Districts.

FRA's Vision is to be recognized for its diverse membership and commitment to sustaining the success of the forest products industry.

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