

Testimony from Joe Seymour, Executive Director of the Biomass Thermal Energy Council, to the Biomass R & D Technical Advisory Committee (May 22, 2015)

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) today. I'm Joe Seymour, Executive Director of the Biomass Thermal Energy Council, an association of biomass fuel producers, appliance manufacturers and distributors, supply chain companies and non-profit organizations that view biomass thermal energy as a renewable, responsible, clean and energy-efficient pathway to meeting America's energy needs.

Today, I'm happy to report on agency successes and new momentum towards the increased federal recognition and deployment of bioheat technologies and fuels.

As you may have heard from earlier this year, President Obama's Executive Order (EO) 13693, "Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade," the successor to EO 13514, stipulates biomass thermal energy as a path for government agencies to meet their agency greenhouse gas reduction goals. This new EO presents an ample opportunity for the federal government to demonstrate leadership on deployment of bioheat technologies and fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the process.

The Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) has reported that in Fiscal Year 2013, federal buildings used approximately 143 million gallons of fuel oil and 19 million gallons of propane, for a total cost of nearly \$534 million.

When biomass fuel is available, the General Services Administration has reported that these fossil fuels may be displaced by commercially available bioheat system in a cost effective manner.

Numerous agencies have already demonstrated progress through their 2014 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plans with regard to biomass energy and bioheat. These advancements include:

- **Department of Energy (DOE)**
 - The DOE's goal from its 2014 Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan is to "Develop capacity for biomass generation," with a narrative that notes "DOE views biomass as a key renewable energy resource."
 - Case in point, the DOE has six operating biomass plants. The most well known of these, the Savannah River Site Biomass Steam Combined Heat and Power Plant, generated 69 GWh of electricity and 567 billion BTUs in FY2013.
- **Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
 - Under its plan, the USDA notes that it will "Develop biomass capacity for energy generation."
 - Also, the recent USDA announcement and funding of four additional State Wood Energy Teams to 20 overall, plus other grants for biomass-related R&D (including the development of a U.S. wood chip fuel standard) bolsters the department's support of advanced bioheat fuels and technologies.
- **Department of Defense (DOD)**
 - The DOD's Ft. Carson is buying electricity from a wood biomass project at Colorado State University.
- **Department of the Interior (DOI)**
 - The DOI states in its 2014 plan that 7.5% of facility electricity is from renewable energy sources and half (50%) of the energy obtained from new renewable energy sources was from biomass (includes both on-site systems and REC's)

- Additionally, the DOI plans to increase access to public lands for renewable energy development leases. (Goal of 16,500 MW increase in renewable energy on public lands since 2009).

Where an agency may not have the ability to install bioheat systems onsite, there will be direction from FEMP on using tradable Thermal Renewable Energy Credits to demonstrate compliance, akin to existing Renewable Energy Credit markets.

While not applicable to the new EO, the Environmental Protection Agency has recently launched a Renewable Heating and Cooling website portal to assist residential and commercial building owners in deploying geo, solar, and biomass heating technologies.

On the Hill, there are also several legislative proposals that would allow DOE and USDA to directly and formally support the deployment of bioheat and biopower projects as well as provide R & D for their necessary logistical and processing needs. These measures include:

- The Bioenergy Act of 2015 from Sen. Wyden (D-OR) that would appropriate \$94 million and would encourage DOE and USDA coordination
- A Sen. Wyden-led appropriations request of \$11 million that would expand BETO's focus to include bioheat and biopower

I also wanted to provide a brief update on a private sector-led effort to establish a method of test and eventual efficiency standard for commercial bioheat systems. We—BTEC—are a month away from developing the first draft of the protocol, and we are likely one year away from publishing the final document. There remains an opportunity for a member of DOE and or the TAC to participate as an observing project partner.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the TAC. My comments will be posted to the post-event notes, and I welcome any comments you may have at this time.

Respectfully submitted,



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