United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 30, 2015

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Dr. Ernest Moniz
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Administrator McCarthy, Secretary Moniz, and Secretary Vilsack:

We write to support biomass energy as a sustainable, responsible, renewable, and economically significant energy source. Federal policies across all departments and agencies must remove any uncertainties and contradictions through a clear, unambiguous message that forest bioenergy is part of the nation's energy future.

Many states are relying on renewable biomass to meet their energy goals, and we support renewable biomass to create jobs and economic growth while meeting our nation's energy needs. A comprehensive science, technical, and legal administrative record supports a clear and simple policy establishing the benefits of energy from forest biomass. Federal policies that add unnecessary costs and complexity will discourage rather than encourage investment in working forests, harvesting operations, bioenergy, wood products, and paper manufacturing. Unclear or contradictory signals from federal agencies could discourage biomass utilization as an energy solution.

The carbon neutrality of forest biomass has been recognized repeatedly by numerous studies, agencies, institutions, legislation, and rules around the world, and there has been no dispute about the carbon neutrality of biomass derived from residuals of forest products manufacturing and agriculture. Our constituents employed in the biomass supply chain deserve a federal policy that recognizes the clear benefits of forest bioenergy. We urge you to ensure that federal policies are consistent and reflect the carbon neutrality of forest bioenergy.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Roy Blunt
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

John Boozman
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Richard Burr
United States Senator

Joe Donnelly
United States Senator

Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

Thad Cochran
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

John Cornyn
United States Senator

Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

Tom Cotton
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Joe Manchin, III
United States Senator

Steve Daines
United States Senator

Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator

Cory Gardner
United States Senator

Claire A. McCaskill
United States Senator

Lindsey Graham
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Johnny Isaskon
United States Senator

Bill Nelson
United States Senator

Ron Johnson
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

David Perdue
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Rob Portman
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

James E. Risch
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Jeff Sessions
United States Senator

Tim Scott
United States Senator

John Thune
United States Senator

Richard C. Shelby
United States Senator

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Patrick J. Toomey
United States Senator

David Vitter
United States Senator

Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator