

# **Ensuring Forest Sustainability in the Development of Wood Biofuels and Bioenergy: Implications for Federal and State Policies**

## **A Policy Dialogue**

**Robin O'Malley**  
Director, Program Development  
The H. John Heinz III Center for  
Science, Economics and the  
Environment

# Framing Thoughts:

- ❖ Wood bioenergy (fuels, power) has an important role in US energy future
- ❖ Bioenergy will change forest practice and policy
- ❖ Forests are a limited resources; renewable does not necessarily mean sustainable
- ❖ Goal: how to make wood bioenergy sustainable

# Context for this issue

- ❖ **Bioenergy: using woody biomass to create**
  - liquid fuels (e.g., ethanol)
  - electricity
  - heat
- ❖ **Drivers**
  - Renewable Fuel Standard (EISA 2007): 16 bgy by 2022
  - State renewable portfolio standards
  - (draft) Federal renewable electricity standard
  - *25% by 2025*

## ***Context, continued – and some questions***

- ❖ **Main sources to meet RES/RPS: wind, solar, biomass** (efficiency often treated separately)
- ❖ **Renewable resources not evenly distributed**
- ❖ **Major increases in demand for woody biomass:**
  - “Residuals” or “roundwood”?
  - Increased harvest or bid from existing users?
  - “Conventional” forestry or “plantations”
  - Federal lands?
  - Assuring sustainability – set asides or standards or both?

# Heinz Center – Pinchot Policy Dialogue

- ❖ Engage multiple interests re: forests or bioenergy to ensure adequate attention to forests
- ❖ First meeting – February 2009
- ❖ Participants:
  - Biofuels, forest products, bio-electricity, combined heat/power, landowners (small and large)
  - Federal, state, local, and regional governments
  - NGOs (regional, national, forest-focused, broad agendas)
  - Academic and other experts

# Key Initial Findings

- ❖ **Sustainability:** Major positive potential, BUT need to address lifecycle carbon benefits, local and landscape-scale effects.
- ❖ **Policy Ambivalence / Confusion:** What goal? Liquid fuel? Climate mitigation? Forest sustainability? Employment / economic development?
- ❖ **Tilted playing field**
  - Subsidies and incentives
  - Distributed generation and the grid

# Future Dialogue Activities

- ❖ **Mapping policy goals and effects**
- ❖ **Subsidies and incentives**
- ❖ **Grid-related issues**
- ❖ **Regional perspectives – how is this working out (or is it?) on the ground?**

# Concluding Thoughts:

- ❖ **Wood bioenergy (fuels, power) has an important role in US energy future**
- ❖ **Bioenergy will change forest practice and policy**
- ❖ **Forests are a limited resources; *renewable* does not necessarily mean *sustainable***
- ❖ **Goal: how to make wood bioenergy sustainable**

# Thank you

[www.heinzcenter.org/forestbioenergy](http://www.heinzcenter.org/forestbioenergy)

[www.pinchot.org/current\\_projects/bioenergy](http://www.pinchot.org/current_projects/bioenergy)

[omalley@heinzcenter.org](mailto:omalley@heinzcenter.org)

202-737-6307

[alsample@pinchot.org](mailto:alsample@pinchot.org)

202-797-6580