



June 9, 2010

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6150

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6150

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Murkowski:

On behalf of our regional Governors' associations and the Washington State University, we write to urge your support for authorization of the National Bioenergy Partnership (the Partnership) as Congress continues its consideration of energy legislation. This vital program was originally created by Congress and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) specifically to build the informational networks among federal agencies, state governments, the research community and private sector that can strengthen regional markets for deployment of bioenergy technologies and resources. The Partnership has a 25 year track record of successfully creating these regional networks, and providing the objective information that bioenergy projects need to get off the ground and succeed.

Action by Congress to authorize the Partnership can ensure its continuation as an effective, nation-wide network that can assist federal agencies, such as DOE, in responding to the many emerging bioenergy issues with proven knowledge, experience and information outreach to public decision-makers, researchers, and the public. The House of Representatives has authorized the Partnership in legislation it has passed in recent years. We request that similar authorizing language be included in U.S. Senate energy legislation.

As a collaborative of five successful regional biomass energy programs with deep ties into state and regional energy markets, the Partnership is a vital complement to the regulatory, research, and financial assistance work of the DOE, the Department of Agriculture, and the Environmental Protection Agency among others. The Partnership is uniquely positioned to offer timely and effective support for expanded biomass development. It has the proven capability – recognized by DOE's own peer review process – to build public and private sector networks; leverage federal, state, and private resources; and provide technical assistance, information, citizen outreach and education. By authorizing the Partnership, Congress acknowledges the regional nature of energy resources; and it strengthens the capability of cooperative federal-state-private sector actions that can address opportunities and barriers within the regional energy markets.

When Congress enacted the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA), it recognized the nation's need to foster all forms of domestic energy production as a means to increase our energy security. Congress has called for cooperative initiatives among the federal agencies, states, and industry to accelerate this goal. Much attention is focused on next-generation energy technologies. However, bioenergy in its many forms offers numerous market ready opportunities to provide domestic energy now, while simultaneously improving the environment and creating economic development for rural America. The Partnership already has in place a unique structure that brings together knowledge of biomass technology and regional resources with an ability to address policy issues in order to promote deployment. It can be a powerful tool to sustain EISA's goals for more effective cooperation, as well as the provisions in the energy legislation that Congress is now developing.

The Partnership is a collaboration of four regional Governors' organizations – the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) Policy Research Center, Inc., the Midwestern Governors Association (MGA), the Southern States Energy Board (SSEB), and the Western Governors' Association (WGA) – and the Pacific Regional Biomass Partnership hosted by Washington State University. Together, it represents 50 states, two territories and the District of Columbia. We are ready to work with you and the federal agencies on this issue. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Alex Schroeder, Program Director at WGA, (303) 623-9378, or aschroeder@westgov.org.

Sincerely,



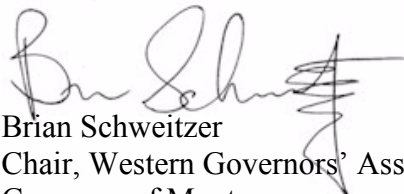
Donald L. Carcieri
Chair, Coalition of Northeastern Governors
Governor of Rhode Island
Northeast Regional Biomass Program



Ted Strickland
Chair, Midwestern Governors Association
Governor of Ohio
Midwest Regional Biomass Program



Joe Manchin, III
Chair, Southern States Energy Board
Governor of West Virginia
Southeast Regional Biomass Program



Brian Schweitzer
Chair, Western Governors' Association
Governor of Montana
Western Regional Biomass Program



Elson S. Floyd, Ph.D.
President, Washington State University
Pacific Northwest Regional Biomass Partnership

Enclosures

National Bioenergy Partnership

REGIONAL COORDINATION WITH LOCAL IMPACTS

“When the regional biomass program was in place, funding came to the energy division in our state. We did a lot of innovative stuff. These partnerships worked.”

West Virginia Energy Office
representative

“Because of our involvement with the Partnership, private foundations, universities and the Agriculture Research Service became partners” in this field study of the carbon sequestration potential of switchgrass.

Pennsylvania family farmer at
2006 Congressional Staff Briefing

“I have no doubt that had we not received funding from the regional biomass energy program, there would never have been a state biomass council.”

South Carolina Energy Office
representative



The National Bioenergy Partnership is composed of five long-standing regional biomass energy programs made up of four governors' organizations and Washington State University. It encompasses all 50 states, two U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.

The Partnership's mission is to facilitate the increased use of bioenergy and bio-based products through coordinated federal, regional, and state outreach education and technical assistance.

SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT USE OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

Biomass is a diverse energy resource whose opportunities for development and end-uses vary across the nation. The Partnership is designed to recognize the regional diversity of bioenergy resources and options for end-uses. Its work includes assessments of regional biomass resources, potential regional markets for bioenergy, and conversion technologies best suited to the resource.

LEVERAGING EFFORTS

In three years, the National Biomass Partnership directly influenced \$85 million in federal bioenergy investments and \$357 million in state and private investments across the Nation, helped create biomass working groups in more than 24 states, and provided bioenergy education to more than 12,000 people across the country. These efforts generated jobs, provided environmental benefits, and fostered economic development through the use of indigenous, renewable resources. (Source: DOE Program Review, *Measuring the Success of the Biomass Regional Partnerships*)

A CONDUIT TO COORDINATE STATE AND FEDERAL EFFORTS

The National Bioenergy Partnership has built a nation-wide set of networks among the federal agencies such as USDA, DOE, EPA; the 50 states and territories; and the private sector that is valued for providing objective technical and informational assistance. This network serves federal, state and local officials as well as private sector stakeholders ranging from farm bureaus, foresters, researchers, bioenergy developers, and energy users in the residential, commercial and institutional sectors. This network can “get out the message” about federal and state biomass policies and programs; connect state and private organizations interested in these programs; and contribute to more informed and targeted public and private sector applicants for federal programs. The result can be increased opportunities to leverage federal funds and achieve solid success rates for programs.



WESTERN
GOVERNORS'
ASSOCIATION



Midwestern Governors Association



COALITION OF NORTHEASTERN GOVERNORS



Examples of Partnership Initiatives and Activities

Food and Fuel Webinar

The National Bioenergy Partnership (NBP) hosted a webinar for state officials to brief state policy officials on the findings and assumptions of diverse research on the “food-fuel” issue and the role of the federal renewable fuel standard in the national and global debate.

MTBE Substitutes

The decision of two northeast states to ban MTBE in gasoline potentially affected the Northeast’s regional gasoline supply and logistics chain. A public-private forum organized by the northeast regional program provided critical information on logistics issues and compatible state regulations that aided in a seamless transition to ethanol blending following the phase-out of MTBE. This work provided a template for states to phase in ethanol and mitigate any potential for shortages and price spikes.

Promoting Regional Biomass Solutions

Through funding provided by the Partnership, the western states provided funding to state and industry efforts in the West to promote a variety of biomass projects that focused on the use of woody biomass to promote forest health and the utilization of waste streams such as byproducts from agricultural and ranching activities. These small grants leveraged federal funding with contributions from states and industry and have been a catalyst for identifying biomass options as a means to promote rural development.

Identifying Multiple Uses for Biomass

In support of the Partnership, the southeast worked with all the regional biomass programs to develop a technology matrix that would allow users to match end-use applications and biomass feedstocks with specific characteristics to appropriate conversion technologies. The goal of this effort was to increase bioenergy development intensity by providing state biomass officials with a resource tool for sound decision-making.

Regional Contacts

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