



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

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April 17, 2008

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chairman
The Honorable Pete V. Domenici, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
The Honorable Saxby Chambliss, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
328 Senate Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, Chairman
The Honorable Don Young, Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson, Chairman
The Honorable Bob Goodlatte, Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Bingaman, Harkin, Rahall, and Peterson & Ranking
Members Domenici, Chambliss, Young and Goodlatte:

The Western Governors' Association supports changes to the existing definition of renewable biomass in the *Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007*. We are concerned that the current definition in Section 211 limits slash and pre-commercial thinnings to those removed from non-federal forestlands. The West has tremendous wildfire and forest health problems which require significant reductions in hazardous fuels across the landscape, on both public and private lands. We believe that the current renewable biomass definition should be amended to include biomass from hazardous fuels reductions on federal lands.

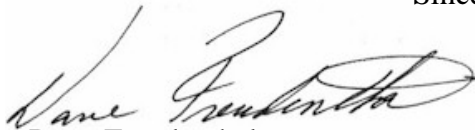
We understand the interest to encourage sustainable, appropriately scaled private sector investment in cellulosic biofuels. However, we believe there are better ways to ensure sustainability that do not reduce our ability to reduce hazardous fuels and stifle smart private sector investment and solutions to our collective problems.

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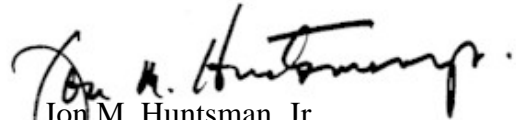
We believe expanding the renewable biomass definition to include materials from federal lands will help us address two significant issues facing the West: reducing wildfire threats and diversifying our energy sources. Western Governors believe we have the blueprints in hand to guide decisions on biomass use through our reports: *10-Year Comprehensive Wildfire Strategy*; the *Clean Energy, Strong Economy and a Healthy Environment*; and *Transportation Fuels for the Future*.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,



Dave Freudenthal
Governor of Wyoming
WGA Chair



Jon M. Huntsman, Jr.
Governor of Utah
WGA Vice-Chair