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
Rob Portman  
United States Senator

James E. Risch  
United States Senator

Jeff Sessions  
United States Senator

John Thune  
United States Senator

Thom Tillis  
United States Senator

David Vitter  
United States Senator

Jon Tester  
United States Senator

Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

Tim Scott  
United States Senator

Richard C. Shelby  
United States Senator

Patrick J. Toomey  
United States Senator

Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator