

Charter

For the

Federal Woody Biomass Utilization Working Group

Preamble

The Federal Working Group, hereafter denoted as Working Group, promotes and supports the utilization of woody biomass and woody biomass products and residues from forest and woodland health, management and restoration treatments wherever environmentally, economically and legally appropriate.

Goals/Objectives

The primary focus is implementation of the forest health and hazardous fuel reduction objectives of the President's Healthy Forests Initiative, National Fire Plan, Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003, and Energy Policy Act of 2005 as an opportunity to use some of those by-products to diversify the nation's energy supply (National Energy Policy). However, the Working Group goals and objectives include all woody biomass utilization actions and activities and are not limited to this primary focus. Membership is voluntary and informal in nature to all agencies, henceforth defined as a Federal Agency or Department of the United States Government.

Specific Objectives:

- Coordinate, plan, enable, and encourage utilization of woody biomass through budget, policy and program management, financial analysis, research and development, and technical assistance as authorized.
- Implement the Policy Principles of the Woody Biomass MOU (Memorandum of Understanding on Policy Principles for Woody Biomass Utilization for Restoration and Fuel Treatments on Forests, Woodlands and Rangelands) among the principal MOU departments: US Department of Agriculture (USDA); Department of the Interior (DOI) and Department of Energy (DOE). Other member's agencies may also elect to participate in the implementation of the MOU.
- Serve as technical and policy advisors on woody biomass utilization to the Biomass Research and Development Board (hereafter referred to as the Biomass Board) and to other agencies participating in the Working Group, the Administration, the Congress, and interested parties when that authority exists.
- Function as an information clearing house to help identify relevant woody biomass utilization technologies, foster joint demonstrations and recommend pilot projects, identify research and development needs, and highlight successful community based woody biomass projects.
- Develop liaisons and enhance collaboration with external organizations and partners that have mutual interest in the utilization of biomass.

Membership and Participating Agencies and Organizations

The Working Group is open to all interested technical and policy specialists in the federal government working on issues related to the inventory, project planning and implementation, feedstock production, transportation, use and marketing of woody biomass. This includes all related research and development, technical assistance and application, management, and administration activities.

Membership is open and welcomed from all interested federal agencies. Please see Appendix A for a nonexclusive list of possible agency participation.

External organizations and professional societies who have interest in collaboration on woody biomass utilization common goals and activities may participate in information exchange only. This does not intend or imply any program or budget coordination or oversight between the federal agencies and external organizations.

Formal Roles/Responsibilities

The Working Group will advise the Biomass Board as appropriate. The Working Group meets annually with the Biomass Board to receive direction and guidance, to review progress on the goals of the Charter and annual plans-of-work, and to provide information for executive decisions. The Working Group will be comprised of at least one staff representative and one alternate representative from each of the participating agencies.

Working Group meetings will be held quarterly, primarily within the Washington, DC area. All Working Group meetings will be open to any interested party at any level within said federal agencies. Furthermore, all Working Group meetings, except the annual meeting with the Biomass Board, will be open to interested organization and professional society representatives. Group meetings and processes for interacting with key policy-makers are structured and held regularly, with reports being shared widely.

There shall be a Chair for the Working Group selected annually by the members, and generally shall be rotated between the USDA and DOI as the principal federal land-management agencies. The Chair will be responsible for scheduling meetings at least once every quarter and will serve as the principal Point of Contact (POC) for the Working Group. Each agency will also designate a Point of Contact to serve in a coordination and communication role for Department activities and as an alternate POC for the Chair.

The Working Group Chair and agency point-of-contacts (POCs) will provide liaison with the Biomass Board, and will coordinate Liaisons to appropriate biomass coordination groups (USDA Energy Council, USDA Biobased Products and Bioenergy Coordinating Council, and other appropriate entities). The Liaisons will be responsible for representing the interests of the Working Group at such meetings and for communicating the meeting notes and actions back to the Working Group.

Each agency will be responsible for all costs of member or alternate participation in the Working Group. Any expenditures deemed necessary to meet the objectives of the Charter

will be authorized and funded through the participating agencies as agreed to by those individual agencies.

Communications

The Chair will be responsible for developing and maintaining a communication network which will include an electronic mailing list. The Chair, individually and through the agency POCs, will distribute information and meeting notes to members and interested parties as appropriate; examples include lists of upcoming national technical meetings and conferences, on-going activities, grant programs, and research related to woody biomass and woody biomass utilization.

Types of Activities

The Working Group will perform actions and activities in support of the objectives identified in this charter such as, but not limited to:

- Provide an annual plan-of-work to the Biomass Board.
- Respond to requests for information and actions, and provide recommendations as requested on policies and issues to the Biomass Board.
- Coordinate Working Group activities through meetings and annual plan-of-work.
- Provide information to and assist member's agencies on biomass utilization issues as appropriate.
- Assist external stakeholders as feasible, appropriate, and as authorized.

Reporting/Federal Working Group Oversight

The Working Group will meet quarterly in the Washington, DC area. Meeting notes will be recorded and shared with members, the Biomass Board, and other appropriate biomass coordination groups (USDA's Biobased Products and Bioenergy Coordinating Council, Wildland Fire Leadership Council, etc.).

The Working Group will provide information and recommendations to the Biomass Board for annual program budgets, budgeting initiatives, implementation plans, performance criterion, and reporting of accomplishments among the agencies.

Authorities

The practices and activities of the Federal Working Group will be implemented under the relevant authorities of the agencies that are parties to this Charter.

Termination

Any of the agencies may terminate its participation in and agreement to this Charter, in whole or in part, at any time. This Charter is executed and made effective and shall expire five years after approval by the Biomass Board.

Participation in Similar Activities

This Charter in no way restricts the agencies from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Principal Contacts for this Charter are:

Bryce Stokes	John Stewart	John Ferrell
USDA Forest Service	US DOI	US DOE
Research and Development	Wildland Fire Coordination	Office of Energy Efficiency
P.O. Box 96090	Room 2660, Main Interior Bldg	and Renewable Energy
Washington, DC 20090	Washington, DC 20240	1000 Independence Ave, SW
		Washington, DC 20585-0121

Non-Fund Obligation Document

This Charter is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Nothing in this Charter authorizes or is intended to obligate the parties to expend, exchange, or reimburse funds, services, or supplies, or transfer or receive anything of value. If it is necessary to expend, exchange, or reimburse funds for any supplies or services, it will be accomplished under a separate contract or agreement approved by an authorized individual, and such expenditures are subject to the availability of appropriations.

No Right of Action

This Charter is strictly for internal management purposes for the Federal Government. It is not legally enforceable and shall not be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of the respective agencies. This Charter shall not be construed to provide a private right or cause for action by any person or entity.

Modification

The principles, practices and activities in this Charter are subject to relevant law, as it may be amended from time to time. Additionally, the parties may modify this Charter at any time by a written amendment approved by the Biomass Board.

APPENDIX A
Participating Agencies/Organizations (proposed)

Agriculture

- Farm Services Agency
- Forest Service
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Office of Energy Policy and New Uses
- Rural Development
 - Business and Cooperative Program
 - Community Development/Empowerment Program
 - Housing and Community Facilities Program
 - Utilities Program

Commerce

- Economic Development Administration
- National Marine Fisheries Service

Defense

Energy

- Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
 - Biomass Program
 - Federal Energy Management Program
- Office of Environment, Safety and Health
 - Environment

Environmental Protection Agency

Executive Office of the President

- Council of Economic Advisors
- Council on Environmental Quality
- Office of Management and Budget
- Office of Science and Technology Policy
- White House Task Force on Energy

Homeland Security

- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Federal Emergency Management Agency

Interior

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- Office of Wildland Fire Coordination
- Office of Minority and Small Business Development

National Science Foundation

Transportation

Treasury

Cooperating non-federal partners (divisions of State government, status to be determined)

National Biomass State and Regional Partnerships

National Association of Governors/Western Governors Association

National Association of Counties

National Association of Conservation Districts

National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils

National Association of State Foresters

Western Forestry Leadership Coalition

Associations and Professional Societies (for coordination purposes, status to be determined)

American Council on Renewable Energy

American Forest Resource Council

American Forest and Paper Association

Biomass Power Producers Alliance

Council of Energy Resource Tribes

InterTribal Timber Council

Society of American Foresters

Southern Alliance for the Utilization of Biomass Resources

25x'25 Coalition

US Combined Heat and Power Association

Renewable Fuels Association