

To the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the review of the New Hampshire Renewable Portfolio Standard. The Northern Forest Center asks that the Commission give serious consideration to the inclusion of incentives for thermal renewable energy in its recommended revisions.

The Northern Forest Center is a non-profit organization that advocates for the Northern Forest region of New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, and New York and helps the region's communities benefit from forest based conservation and economic development initiatives. Based on our regional work we believe that renewable thermal energy generation represents a significant economic and job creation opportunity for New Hampshire as well as a crucial strategy to meet to the state's climate and renewable energy goals. Through our work in the New Hampshire North Country we are aware of numerous institutions, businesses, and communities that are actively considering thermal energy generation from woody biomass and that would benefit from new incentives.

Thermal energy represents more than one-third of all energy consumed in NH, and we are one of the most oil-dependent states in the nation for heating. Reduced demand for fossil fuel to heat homes, businesses and provide industrial process heat represents one of the most cost effective ways to meet our state's clean energy goals. Thermal renewable energy (e.g. biomass, solar, geothermal) can be included in an RPS through a straight BTU-MWH conversion and would provide a significant incentive for applications like biomass combined heat and power (CHP), where no state incentive currently exists. Biomass CHP substitutes a local, renewable resource for imported oil, is highly efficient, and is an opportunity for new jobs and economic growth in the North Country and other parts of our state.

The New Hampshire legislature required the PUC to consider whether and how to include thermal energy in the NH RPS when it passed the RPS law in 2007. Please give serious consideration to including incentives for thermal renewable energy in your recommendations to the Governor and Legislature this year.

**Joe Short**

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