

## BC Bioenergy Strategy

by Karl Hourigan

What do we want? Cleaner energy. When do we want it? Well, how about by 2016? That's the goal the province has set for making BC self-sufficient in generating electricity. To help meet the province's electricity needs for clean, renewable power, the Bioenergy Strategy will tap into BC's natural biomass resources, including sawmill residues, mountain pine beetle-killed timber, logging debris, and agricultural and municipal waste.

When used to generate energy, biomass is considered carbon-neutral because it releases no more carbon into the atmosphere than it absorbs during its lifetime. As a result, bioenergy is seen as a way to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere if it replaces non-renewable sources of energy. BC already leads the country in producing electricity from biomass, but the bioenergy strategy will create new incentives and opportunities.

More specifically, the strategy says the province will set the stage for BC biofuel production to meet 50 percent or more of the province's renewable fuel requirements by 2020. It will also develop at least ten community energy projects that convert local biomass into energy by 2020, and establish one of Canada's most comprehensive provincial biomass inventories that creates waste-to-energy opportunities.



"BC has half of Canada's entire biomass electricity-generating capacity," said Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman. "This strategy helps forest-dependent communities and brings opportunity to the agriculture sector as it looks at recovering maximum value from beetle-killed timber, wood wastes, and agricultural residues to generate renewable energy."



The strategy will help the province achieve its targets for electricity self-sufficiency, with zero net greenhouse gas emissions from energy generation projects. The province will seek legislative approval for \$25 million in funding to establish a provincial Bioenergy Network to foster investment and innovation in BC bioenergy projects and technologies. Legislative approval will also be sought for up to \$10 million in funding over three years for biodiesel production.

The Bioenergy Network will encourage the development of pilot and demonstration projects with industries and communities in key biomass resource areas, and is expected to hasten the development of world-class bioenergy research and technology expertise in BC.

Next steps include:

- Collaborating with the Western Climate Initiative and the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region
- Creating First Nations bioenergy opportunities
- Requiring methane capture from our largest landfills
- Using waste wood from phased-out beehive burners to produce clean energy
- Providing energy providers with information to develop new opportunities
- Supporting wood gasification research, development and commercialization.

*For more information visit <http://www.energyplan.gov.bc.ca/bioenergy/>*