

MASSACHUSETTS BIOMASS WOOD SUPPLY - MYTH AND REALITY

Claims leading to the impression that “clean, waste, wood” and “clean forestry residue” will be able to supply the proposed biomass plants are false and impossible. The following is a list of proposed biomass plants in western Massachusetts: Russell, 50 MW, Springfield 30 MW, Pittsfield 40 MW, Greenfield (Pioneer) 47 MW, Greenfield (Coop-Power) 20 MW, Fitchburg 15 MW, Existing Pinetree 17 MW --> Total = 219 MW

According to the report “[Biomass Availability Analysis –Five Counties of Western Massachusetts](http://www.mass.gov/Eoeea/docs/doer/renewables/biomass/bio-08-02-28-wmass-assess.pdf)” www.mass.gov/Eoeea/docs/doer/renewables/biomass/bio-08-02-28-wmass-assess.pdf On Page 11:

1 MW requires 13,000 green tons of wood fuel per year, thus, to provide fuel for 219 MW

→ 219 x 13,000 green tons = **2,847,000 green tons of wood required annually**

The same document on page 31 claims that there are 629,000 green tons of TOTAL available “waste” wood in all western Massachusetts, including Worcester County. This number includes C&D waste, and in reality is likely to be much smaller as it does not account for removing contaminated wood, reduced land clearing quantities due to the housing market correction, reduced timber residues due to the depressed industry conditions and “waste” wood already claimed by others. Tellingly, whole trees are already being cut to fuel the existing small biomass plant in Fitchburg. (Out of state supplies are excluded due to demands from their own proposed biomass projects.) Even if 629,000 green tons were available:

**The total wood required from whole trees (forest cutting) =
2,847,000 green tons – 629,000 green tons waste = 2,218,000 green tons per year**

For perspective, the current average annual public and private timber harvest on *all* MA lands is about 500,000 to 600,000 green tons, depending if branches and tops left on the forest floor are included. Logging rates would more than triple on all Massachusetts forests to provide this wood, and all forests could be logged in 25 years.

According to “[Silvicultural and Ecological Considerations Of Forest Biomass Harvesting In Massachusetts](http://www.mass.gov/Eoeea/docs/doer/renewables/biomass/bio-silviculture.pdf)” www.mass.gov/Eoeea/docs/doer/renewables/biomass/bio-silviculture.pdf p3, Availability of “sustainable” biomass from lands “likely to be involved in biomass harvesting” is 500,000 dry tons (x 1.9= 950,000 green tons)

However, this report (page 25) targets 56%, or 532,000 green tons (280,000 dry tons), to come from public lands annually and the remaining 44% or 418,000 green tons of that likely “available” 950,000 green tons to come from private lands >100 acres (requiring doubling the logging on private lands which is not at all certain).

The amount of wood proposed to be cut from public lands is entirely implausible as it would require state land logging to *increase more than 10 times, or 1,000%* higher than 1980-2006 historical averages of about 50,000 green tons per year. Already, attempts by DCR and DFW to increase logging on public lands has led to public outcry and if the state attempted to get 532,000 green tons of wood from public lands, there would likely be a public revolt. Already, Channel 5 news has aired a story on this current issue which can be seen at:

www.thebostonchannel.com/video/18868966/index.html

Thus, if logging on public lands were to continue at 25 year historical rates, which can be assumed to be socially acceptable through experience, the likely private land availability and socially acceptable public land availability of whole tree biomass from additional logging is closer to:

418,000 green tons private + 50,000 green tons public = 468,000 green tons

This is only about 20% of the required 2,218,000 green tons of tree fuel supply for all these plants

Even this amount requires doubling the logging in Massachusetts. Additionally, many other small biomass power plants are proposed as well as heating projects and even bio-fuel gasoline from trees proposals are being developed in Massachusetts. In combination with increasing air and water pollution, adding CO2 to the atmosphere and degradation of forest ecosystems, these plants are quite “brown”, not “green” as sold. In fact, *any increased* burning of forests is a bad idea from a carbon, pollution and forest preservation standpoint.