DEVELOPING A BIOMASS HEATING ROADMAP FOR NEW YORK STATE
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INTRODUCTION: Renewable biomass resources can be used for heating in a range of settings, from residential to large-scale industrial applications. In the U.S., a wide variety of biomass burning devices are available, ranging from high-polluting, inefficient technologies to clean-burning, highly efficient technologies. The devices can use biomass feed stocks from a variety of agricultural and forestry sources. As the market for these products evolves, there is significant potential for a state to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and create economic growth opportunities. A state's chosen path will have long-term ramifications for the well-being of its forests, air quality, economy, and public health.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: NESCAUM and its project partners are developing a Biomass Heating Roadmap for New York State. The Roadmap will evaluate critical technical, environmental, public health, forest health, economic, and policy issues; assess potential biomass fuel feedstocks and their availability; assess biomass combustion technologies and the implications of employing them; and identify critical actions to create a pathway that can: (1) stimulate the necessary research, investments and policies to build appropriate capacity; (2) maintain feedstock supplies; and (3) ensure public health and environmental protection.

The Roadmap will detail a strategic plan to guide New York State as it considers expanding the use of biomass in clean and efficient heating applications. Specifically, it will:

- compare the relative performance, cost and availability of current and potential future biomass heating feedstock and technologies to each other and to current and potential future fossil fuels in terms of trends, barriers, and potential solutions;
- describe environmental and public health implications of different biomass heating options, and compares these to fossil fuels;
- outline criteria, testing protocols, and best management practices to improve performance efficiency, emissions, sustainability, safety, and public health;
- assess micro and macro-economic impacts of expanded biomass use and introduction of advanced technologies in terms of New York State market potential, commercial viability, and job creation;
- delineate needs for research, workforce training and public outreach; and
- analyze policy options in the context of local, state, regional, national, and global events and markets.

The intent of this effort is to provide information that improves New York State's understanding of policy options for promoting the use of efficient and cleaner-burning biomass combustion, as well as market opportunities for increased use of such biomass technologies for heating. The project is scheduled to run from July 2012 through December 2013.

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