

May 19, 2009

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman  
Chair  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment  
United States House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman and Chairman Markey:

I am writing on behalf of The Nature Conservancy to urge that the Committee strengthen or, at the very least, retain, the language in the draft bill pertaining to the definition of renewable biomass.

The Conservancy agrees that harvesting trees from private lands for energy markets may provide revenue to land owners that will allow them to keep their lands forested. However, this objective is served only if the harvest is sustainable and done in a way not to degrade the quality of the forest lands as naturally regenerating systems.

The existing language goes a long way toward achieving this goal and should, at the very least, be retained. The language could be further strengthened by:

- 1) requiring third party (such as State Forester) determination that harvest activities are sustainable
- 2) providing authority to the EPA or another Federal Official with input from the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to exclude or limit the amount of harvesting in instances where such harvesting is on land deemed to be of conservation importance and where such harvesting is demonstrated to be affecting specific threatened forest types or significant wildlife habitat

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Bendick  
Director, U.S. Government Relations