

## A BRIEFING FROM THE BACK BIOMASS CAMPAIGN<sup>1</sup>

*Rt Hon David Cameron MP: "We should...increase support for an expansion in sustainable biomass generation, which is reliable and cost-effective, and will help us to meet our renewables target."*

As the Prime Minister highlighted earlier this year, power and CHP from sustainable biomass offers proven, practical, secure low carbon energy as part of a balanced energy mix. As well as stimulating economic growth and valuable green jobs in the UK, biomass technology can boost energy security and enable other types of energy generation on the grid. At a time when taxpayer's money is tight, biomass offers cost-competitive carbon savings compared to many other low carbon technologies<sup>2</sup>. The Government's incoming Sustainability Criteria, supported by the industry, will also ensure not only that carbon savings become even more cost-effective over time, but also that biomass is more sustainable than ever.

### BIOMASS TECHNOLOGY CREATES JOBS AND BOOSTS GROWTH

- The biomass industry could generate **£1bn** and support more than **15,000 jobs** in the UK if given the support it needs, according to the Forestry Commission.
- There is huge potential for a mature UK biomass industry to aid the economic recovery and create jobs - recent statistics from the **2011 EurObserver report show that, when compared to France and Germany, the UK employs only 2000, compared to 60,000 and 68,000 respectively.**
- The industry could help contribute to **green growth in the UK by enhancing the value** of biomass sources. Actively developing the UK biomass energy supply chain would place a **real economic value on wood** thus incentivising better managed woodland and a host of related industries.
- The **biomass industry is the largest employer of all technologies** in the renewable energy industry across Europe, and, according to Energy Minister Greg Barker, "*one of the major new growth opportunities that can help the UK economy out of recession.*"

### BIOMASS IS COMPETITIVE, SAFE AND STABLE

- As a mature technology, **biomass is more cost efficient** than many other renewable and low carbon options, but **Government must provide long-term policy and regulatory certainty** so that the industry can mobilise to deliver low carbon energy quickly and affordably
- Biomass has predictable, stable sources of supply, and is thus less prone to price volatility. It could also provide stability against price shocks in other fuel sources.
- The industry has a **very low capital expenditure requirement**, due to its ability to engage in co-firing with coal and, ultimately, full conversion of existing plants to biomass. The Government's incoming Sustainability Criteria, supported by the industry, will also ensure not only that carbon savings become even more cost-effective over time.

### BIOMASS IS A CRITICAL PART OF THE ENERGY MIX

- According to the IEA, biomass is the **fourth largest energy resource in the world** after oil, coal and gas. It estimates that **by 2050 sustainable sources of biomass could supply the world with 10% - 20% of its primary energy requirements.**<sup>3</sup>
- Biomass is the only renewable, low carbon energy source currently **capable of both baseload and peaking generation**, meaning it **can run constantly**, or be quickly mobilised to fill a gap in supply.
- It provides a stable platform for intermittent and inflexible technologies, and is ideally suited to help **fill the 'energy gap'** created by the phasing out of fossil fuels.<sup>4</sup>

### BIOMASS IS A SUSTAINABLE, RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE

- Unlike fossil fuels, **biomass fuel can be drawn from renewable, sustainable sources.**
- According to a recent report by UKERC scientists at Imperial College, **up to one fifth of global energy could be provided by biomass (plants) without damaging food production.**
- The new **Government sustainability criteria** will ensure that, from April 2013, all biomass used for electricity generation 1MWe and above comes from demonstrably sustainable low carbon sources.
- According to DECC<sup>5</sup> and as verified by the International Energy Agency (IEA)<sup>6</sup>, sustainably managed forests "can both **provide a stable rate of CO2 removal from the atmosphere** and supply renewable materials and woodfuel." Ensuring that biomass feedstock is sustainable means that biomass can "substitute for fossil fuels" to deliver **Green House Gas savings.**

<sup>1</sup> The Back Biomass Campaign is run by the Renewable Energy Association (on behalf of the biomass industry).

<sup>2</sup> The table of proposed support levels for all renewable technologies may be found here:

[http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/cons\\_ro\\_review/cons\\_ro\\_review.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/cons_ro_review/cons_ro_review.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> IEA Bioenergy: Bi [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/cons\\_ro\\_review/cons\\_ro\\_review.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/cons_ro_review/cons_ro_review.aspx) oenergy - a stable and reliable energy source:

<http://www.task39.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8IsyplOAwXs%3D&tabid=4426&language=en-US>

<sup>4</sup> DECC: UK Renewable Energy Roadmap, p67 <http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/meeting-energy-demand/renewable-energy/2167-uk-renewable-energy-roadmap.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Evidence base including the READ Report, IEA Task 38 Work, DECC & EU Research.

<sup>6</sup> International Energy Agency (IEA): Bioenergy Project Development and Biomass Supply <http://www.iea.org/textbase/nppdf/free/2007/biomass.pdf>