

## [Using Northwest Timber to Produce Green Energy and Create Jobs](#)

### Local News

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**Washington, D.C.**- The forests of the Northwest have enormous potential to produce clean, green energy, according to experts who participated today in a field briefing of the House Science and Technology Committee's Energy and Environment Subcommittee led by Congressman Brian Baird (D-WA-03). Congressman Greg Walden (R-OR-02) and Congressman Jay Inslee (D-WA-01) also participated. "One of the answers to our nation's energy problems could literally be in our own backyard," said Congressman Baird. "Our timber economy has been hit particularly hard by this recession. These technologies could help put thousands of people back to work, while generating clean, green energy that can power a 21st century economy, help end our addiction to foreign oil and combat global overheating." Today, experts discussed how forest management planning can include the use of low-value materials from forests for energy production. Many of these technologies already exist, while others are still in the development stage. If properly utilized, these technologies could potentially make use of forest biomass that would otherwise be deemed unusable or low-value under current forest practices. Instead of being discarded, these materials could be repurposed to create renewable energy that could power cars, heat thousands of homes or create new renewable materials that can replace petroleum based chemicals. "Washington state is the perfect place for a field hearing on how smart, sustainable and balanced forestry practices can contribute to alternative, low-carbon energy solutions and stimulate the American economy," said Congressman Jay Inslee (D-WA-01). This previously unusable forest biomass can be potentially dangerous if left alone, because it can build up, and eventually act as kindling for a catastrophic wildfire. With many parts of the Northwest experiencing double digit unemployment, experts agree that better forest management practices could not only produce renewable energy, but also provide better fire protection, and create thousands of jobs in these tough economic times.

"In Oregon, we're bracing yet again for another summer of catastrophic wildfire that will significantly pollute the environment and continue to destroy our forests, which used to be one of the state's most powerful economic engines," said Congressman Walden. "We also have the dubious distinction of being second only to Michigan in highest unemployment. This is simply unacceptable. Oregon and the Pacific Northwest should be the biomass capital of the world. Substantial financial resources waiting to be invested have been sidelined by a lack of certainty for a long-term biomass supply from our federal forests. It is high time to take decisive action and ensure a steady biomass supply from our overstocked forests. Our environment and our rural economies will greatly benefit, and badly need it." "We need to take a new approach to forest management in America," concluded Congressman Baird. "Every year, we see the overwhelming majority of the Forest Service's budget literally go up in smoke. By researching these new practices and technologies, we could potentially better protect our forests from fire, and create thousands of jobs, and provide homes all across the Northwest with green, environmentally friendly energy in the process."