



NEW ENGLAND
FORESTRY
FOUNDATION

June 30, 2016

Michael Judge
Director, Renewable and Alternative Energy
Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
100 Cambridge St., Suite 1020
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Comments from New England Forestry Foundation on the MA APS Renewable Heating and Cooling Draft Regulations

Dear Mr. Judge:

New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) appreciates the opportunity to share our perspective on the MA APS Renewable Heating and Cooling Draft Regulations (225 CMR 16.00). We are a 72 year old non-profit conservation organization that both protects forest land and advocates for exemplary forestry across the New England States. Over the last 15 years we have protected one out of every three acres of land protected in New England and now hold conservation restrictions on over 1.1 million acres. We own and manage 150 properties as community forests which are open to the public and demonstrate exemplary forestry, including nearly 8,000 acres of forest land in Massachusetts.

We are on the forefront of identifying how forests and forest products can help mitigate climate change. We are preparing articles for peer reviewed publication that call for analyzing forest potential for climate mitigation beyond site-specific carbon accounting to include a number of other factors that come into play when forests are manipulated and wood is substituted for specific products. Our partners in these papers are the Woods Hole Research Center and the Clean Air Task Force. In addition, our cross cutting initiative, Build it with Wood www.builditwithwood.org seeks to illuminate the extraordinary climate mitigation potential of using engineered forest products in tall wood buildings to decrease the negative climate impacts of steel and concrete.

Thus, it is in the overall context of using our forests in many ways to mitigate climate change that the New England Forestry Foundation wishes to express its support of the MA APS Renewable Heating and Cooling Draft Regulations, and we thank the MA Department of Energy Resources for the opportunity to submit comments. The residential and commercial use of biomass for heating continues to grow across the country, and we hope that MA's new regulations reflect that trend. We have three major comments and suggestions:

1. We are concerned that the regulations incentivize land clearing and development, by defining as sustainable wood removed from forests being converted for development. NEFF signed on to multi-organization consensus letters delivered in 2012 and 2015 when regulations were being drafted under the Renewable Portfolio Standard and Alternative Portfolio Standard that sought to address this same issue. Incentivizing land clearing is inconsistent with the state Global Warming Solutions Act. Actions that permanently destroy forest land reduce the carbon sequestration capacity of the state's forests. In addition, land clearing typically increases sprawl, raising traffic volumes and auto emissions. Moreover, while most of the regulations seek to minimize inefficient incentives, land clearing is typically already profitable, and the regulations as drafted would provide additional unnecessary incentives. The activity incentivized (land clearing) is fundamentally contrary to the purpose of the APS. We request that you revisit these provisions, and require that when forests are permanently cleared for development that the developer be required to partially mitigate the loss of forest and soil carbon and the permanent loss of carbon sequestration that results from deforestation before the wood can be considered as eligible fuel.
2. The sustainability requirements point to a document created by the Forest Guild called Forest Biomass Harvesting and Retention Guidelines for the Northeast. Our concern is that the entire document is referenced as a standard. The document has several sections, including some introductory material that explained the Forest Guild membership principles. Foresters or forests producing woody biomass should not be required to adhere to these organizational membership policies. Please make your regulations specific to the sections of this report that deal with biomass harvesting standards, Section 2 and perhaps the definition sections of Section 1.
3. The guidelines as currently written do not encourage the use of locally grown cordwood as a fuel for renewable wood heat. Massachusetts has more than 30,000 landowners with 10 or more acres of woodlands. This resource can be directly tapped by landowners and homeowners to replace fossil fuels and mitigate climate change. The current standards do not address emission standards for cordwood fueled heaters and require the automatic feeding of fuel which is not practical for cordwood. New U.S. EPA standards are being phased in to drastically cut emissions from cordwood and pellet units. Small landowners and homeowners are the most likely candidates to immediately take advantage of APS credits and thereby to play an active role mitigating climate change, and many of them will have the easiest and most natural access to cordwood. We request that this category of wood heat be accommodated in the regulations.

We again thank you for opportunity to comment. Wood for heating is just one of the many ways the forests of Massachusetts help mitigate climate change while connecting people to the land, ensuring forest-based income to landowners, keeping land out of development, and

enabling foresters to practice exemplary forestry to make our forests even more productive. We support amending the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard to add wood heat and are appreciative of the comprehensive stakeholder process and the current opportunity to comment on the regulations. We would be happy to answer any questions about these comments. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Frank Lowenstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Deputy Director
New England Forestry Foundation