

State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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Governor Signs Bill to Encourage Biomass Energy Production
Working Group to Explore Incentives for Renewable Energy Source

Montpelier, VT – Governor Jim Douglas today signed into law H. 152, *An Act Relating to Encouraging Biomass Energy Production*. The Biomass bill creates a “biomass energy development working group” to investigate and recommend fiscal and regulatory incentives for biomass energy, as well as guidelines and standards for maintaining forest health, procurement standards and other policy considerations for biomass development in Vermont.

“H. 152 will help keep Vermont at the head of the pack when it comes to the development and use of renewable energy,” Governor Douglas said. “Vermont has the cleanest energy portfolio in the nation thanks to an array of renewable sources like biomass energy and we will continue to do all we can to promote clean, local sources of energy,” he added.

While grants and loans are currently available through the Clean Energy Development Fund to encourage biomass energy development in Vermont, H. 152 will hopefully lead to additional incentives for this growing industry.

“Vermonters are overwhelmingly in favor of using renewable, in-state sources for energy. Given that 78% of Vermont is forested, using low- grade wood from our forests to generate more of our own heat and electricity makes good sense,” said Representative Chris Bray, the lead sponsor of the bill. “H. 152 will help promote the wise, sustainable use of our forests, and keep more landowners, loggers, truckers, mills, and foresters at work managing this great Vermont resource for generations to come.”

“This is another important step Vermont is taking to protect our environment and maintain our greenest state ranking,” Douglas continued.

In addition to the biomass energy production bill and the recently enacted wetlands protection bill, Governor Douglas as also signed on to a multi-state climate coalition to address climate change at the national level. “The coalition will be a national voice in our efforts to assist the federal government as it builds out a national energy policy that creates jobs and protects consumers and the environment,” the Governor concluded

The “biomass energy development working group” will report to the House and Senate Committee on Agriculture and the House and Senate Committees on Natural Resources on or before November 15, 2009 and, again, by November 15, 2010.

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