SUPPORT SENATORS SHAHEEN (D-NH) AND COLLINS (R-ME)

COMMUNITY WOOD ENERGY INNOVATION ACT (S. 2790)

In order to keep forests healthy, create wildlife habitat and tackle issues like wildﬁres or insects, forest owners often need to remove small, low-value wood from their forests. This allows other trees to have more space, sunlight and water to grow.

Currently, ﬁnding markets and uses for this low-grade, low value wood, often called biomass, is a growing challenge that is having a real-life effect on the health of family-owned forests, particularly in the intermountain West. Markets not only provide an outlet for this material (so that it does not end up in landﬁlls), but it also provides landowners with the income needed to offset the cost of removing it. Without markets, most landowners can’t afford to conduct this important practice, leaving forests vulnerable and overgrown.

At the same time, nearly half of American homes lack access to natural gas pipelines. These communities could instead turn to advanced wood heating, using this low value, sustainable material, often grown right in their backyard.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY WOOD ENERGY PROGRAM?

- Congress created the Community Wood Energy Program in the 2008 Farm Bill Energy Title with authorization for $5 million per year in program funding.
- The program provides matching grants to state and local governments to cover some of the capital costs of installing wood energy systems.
- Unfortunately, it never received any funding from Congress. It was reauthorized in the 2014 Farm Bill, but again received no congressional appropriations.
- REAUTHORIZES AND EXPANDS THE COMMUNITY WOOD ENERGY PROGRAM to better support investments in energy systems and facilities that use low-value wood.
- HELPS LANDOWNERS FIND USES AND MARKETS for low value, small diameter wood that needs to be removed from our forests to improve forest health and resilience.
- LEVERAGES STATE AND PRIVATE INVESTMENTS making markets a collaborative effort, and encourages and creates rural jobs for local economies.

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