

## Proposed Scope of the Biomass Task Group

**Develop a Shared (or) Mutual Evidence Base:** There is information the group needs to gather to learn and have a common evidence basis for considering various potential policy paths. This information should be gathered, shared, and understood to inform discussion and judgments on specific policies. The Task Group should develop the list of questions necessary that need to be answered, the experts who might help answer them, and develop the work plan to undertake that exploration.

**Working Definition:** The term “biomass” means material from trees, woody plants, or grasses, including limbs, tops, needles, leaves, and other woody parts, grown in a forest, woodland, farm, rangeland, or wildland-urban environment that is the product of forest management, land clearing, ecosystem restoration, or hazardous fuel reduction treatment (from Biomass Energy Developing Working Group, Final Report, Vermont Legislative Council, January 2012)

1) Consider the ongoing operation and expansion of existing and/or the development of new electric-led biomass facilities in Vermont based on their role in climate mitigation, their potential co-benefits, and overall impacts. In doing so, the following will be evaluated:

- a. Impacts (negative and positive) to surrounding communities, cultural/historical/archeological sites and/or resources, and to the State of the Vermont’s residents, air quality, and natural resources.
- b. The source of material used in the facilities, with an eye to ensuring appropriate oversight of harvest activities for all wood products procured for use as fuel in the facilities.
- c. Define what expansion for district heating means considering the physical footprint, emissions, adjacent communities, and natural and cultural resources, weigh costs and benefits, and offer a recommendation.

2) Utilize existing research to further consider the following components of biomass procurement to determine appropriate recommendations and whether biomass sourcing criteria are necessary for:

a. Pellet production

b. Harvest levels that maintain ecosystem integrity and optimize carbon sequestration and storage (the questions of “how much”, “how”, and “ from where”)

3) Consider the components of an educational program which would include outreach materials, as well as technical assistance, to encourage appropriate methods and practices when using wood heat.