

**COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**HEARING**

*Biomass for Thermal Energy and Electricity: An R&D Portfolio for the Future*

October 21, 2009

**Statement of Subcommittee on Energy & Environment Ranking Member Bob Inglis (SC-4)**

Good morning and thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

For about the past 10 years, we've primarily been looking toward biomass as a replacement for petroleum-based transportation fuels. The result has been a substantial interest in converting food crops to fuel, with a smaller emphasis placed on developing cellulosic ethanol.

Environmental and cost concerns are cultivating interest in other types of biomass as a fuel for base load electricity and thermal power. Some biomass can be and is already being used in conventional generation technology; paper mills generate power from milling waste, and woody biomass can be mixed with coal and co-fired in modern, large-scale power plants. More research and technological innovation can expand the reach of renewable biomass fuels in our energy sector.

The subject of today's hearing represents a step in that direction. Developments in renewable natural gas, bio-refineries, biomass transportation, and other technologies will help increase the efficiency of biomass energy and the diversity of organic materials that can be used for energy generation. I'm looking forward to hearing about the state of the industry today and where we should direct Federal R&D resources to overcome remaining technological hurdles.

I also want to admit a parochial interest in bio-power. Two South Carolina universities, including Furman in the Upstate, have launched already bio-energy pilot projects, our robust forestry industry stands to gain jobs and a larger market, and as we'll hear from Mr. James, biomass energy is already creating jobs back home.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses and I yield back the balance of my time.