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## **Sustainable bioenergy is essential to forest value chain, promoting forest health and biodiversity**

*New white paper shows how markets ensure only low-value wood fiber is used for sustainable bioenergy and the potential environmental risks from introducing arbitrary feedstock criteria*

The World Bioenergy Association (WBA) today released a special report titled ‘The risks of regulatory intervention in bioenergy feedstock markets’, describing the unintended and problematic consequences of banning “whole trees” from being used for bioenergy.

Bioenergy is the EU’s largest single source of renewable energy, accounting for almost 60 percent of all renewables consumed in the EU. Amid widespread support for the increased use of sustainable biomass to help reach more ambitious 2030 climate goals, there are also calls to arbitrarily limit certain feedstock due to perceived environmental and biodiversity concerns.

The new white paper shows why banning “whole trees” from bioenergy use can have consequences that are detrimental to sustainable forest management and biodiversity in forests. The report examines wood fiber flows that have evolved over decades – in some cases over a century – into highly efficient market-based systems that allocate resources to the most appropriate end use. Use of wood as material such as timber, plywood or fiberboard is always valued higher than its use as a source of energy.

*“It’s critical to understand wood in terms of value, as opposed to physical attributes like size or diameter”* said John Bingham, lead author and Senior Advisor at Hawkins Wright. *“Sorting harvested wood according to its value is how markets emerged well before the advent of the bioenergy industry, and if allowed to operate efficiently, will continue to ensure that wood fiber flows, sustainably, to the highest and best end-use.”*

Despite the small, yet essential, role of bioenergy in the forest value chain, there have been calls for measures to “minimize the use of whole trees” in sustainable biomass feedstock. This is especially problematic as the term has no meaning in forestry and can be used just as accurately to describe a tiny seedling as a mature tree. As noted in the report, it’s a common misconception that trees of a certain size are automatically considered high value. From this misconception comes the suggestion that to ensure only low value wood is used for bioenergy, the use of whole trees should be prohibited.

*“Data show that source forests for sustainable biomass continue to increase, underscoring that using low-value wood is a sustainable practice that both supports forest growth and the replacement of fossil fuels,”* said WBA President Christian Rakos. *“The sustainability requirements currently in place under the Renewable Energy Directive (REDII), as well as established national legal frameworks and market forces ensure that bioenergy delivers tangible benefits for the climate while supporting healthy forests and protecting biodiversity.”*

Read the white paper here: [Link](#)

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