Project Impacts

NSRC-FUNDED RESEARCH FINAL REPORT

Inventory of U.S. Federal and State Forest Biomass Electricity and Heat Policies

PROJECT AWARD YEAR AND TITLE:

2012

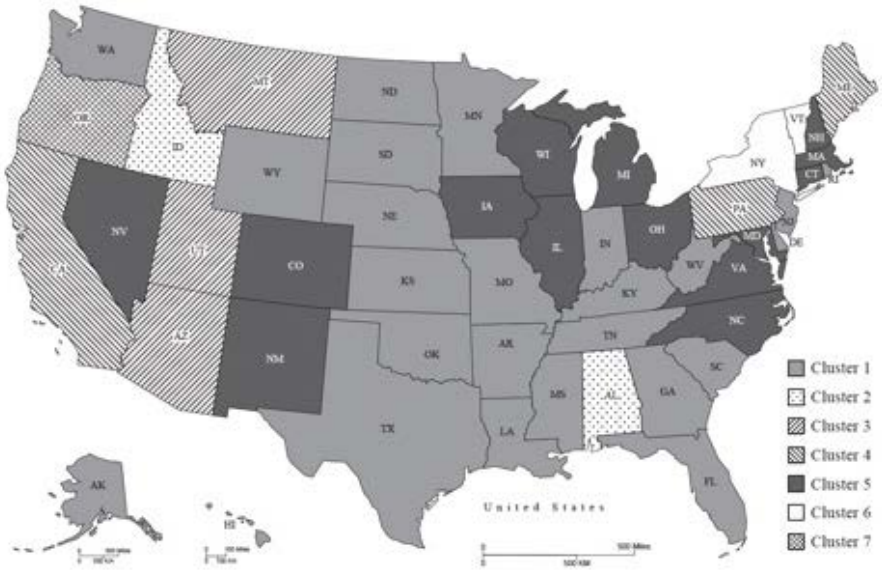
Inventory and Classification of United States Federal and State Forest Biomass Electricity and Heat Policies

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS:

Robert Malmsheimer
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
rwmalmsh@esf.edu

David Newman
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
dnewman@esf.edu

Timothy Volk
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
rwmalmsh@esf.edu



States grouped into seven clusters based on forest biomass policy approach and focus.

NSRC researchers compiled a list of 494 federal and state forest bioenergy policies affecting generation of electricity and heat, effective September 2013. Researchers categorized policy instruments as incentive, regulation, or information. They identified three categories of policies: (1) general renewable energy policies applicable to alternative energy technologies; (2) biomass energy policies targeting agricultural and forest biomass bioenergy, including crops such as switchgrass or willow; and (3) forest biomass energy policies focused on logging and wood manufacturing residuals and materials.

More (113) of these policies were enacted in 2007 and 2008, more than in any other two-year period, and there was a significant increase in the number of forest bioenergy (46) and biomass specific (36) policies by 2013. In all, 279 policies were based on incentives, 115 were regulations, and 100 were information policies. The federal government had more policies than any state except Oregon which had 22 policies, followed by New York (18) and Vermont and California (16 each).

Neighboring states adopted similar numbers and types of policies. Oregon (in cluster by itself) had the highest number of tax incentives and biomass-specific policies, while most Southern, Southeast, Southern Appalachia, and Midwestern states (most dissimilar to Oregon) had a limited number of policies. Most states in remaining clusters offered a mix of integrated policies. Every state had at least one incentive policy that qualified forest biomass for governmental support, but few states had legislation specifically promoting forest bioenergy. Findings provide guidance for development of forest biomass policies in the Northern Forest by enabling transfer of policy approaches to Northern Forest states.

Funding support for this project was provided by the Northeastern States Research Cooperative (NSRC), a partnership of Northern Forest states (New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and New York), in coordination with the USDA Forest Service, an equal opportunity provider.