

### **Fast facts about the *Forest Biomass and Bioenergy* report:**

- The report provides a region-wide assessment of the amount of forest biomass that could be sustainably harvested for energy production in the eight northeastern states from Maine to Pennsylvania.
- It is timely because both federal and state governments are setting renewable energy targets. In the Northeast, it is assumed that forest biomass will be an important part of the renewable energy supply.
- While forests cover two-thirds of the northeastern landscape, the traditional forest products industry removes most of the available net growth.
- The total amount of biomass that can be sustainably harvested for energy is much lower than many previous studies have estimated. Earlier studies were based on limited data.
- Most of the biomass that is available for energy will have to come from recovery of logging waste – the treetops left behind by traditional logging practices. In some states there will also be the potential for a modest increase in tree harvests.

### **The bottom line:**

- If we channel available biomass into the most efficient forms of biomass energy, we estimate that it could make up **1-2% of the region's total energy consumption**.
- The picture is rosier if you (1) look at states with large forestland bases and relatively low energy use, such as Maine, or (2) target specific energy sectors, such as residential heating.
- For example, we estimate that using the biomass to **produce pellets for residential heat** could **replace 16% of the oil** currently used in that energy sector. Or forest biomass could be used to generate **4-6% of the electricity use**.

### **Policy implications:**

- These may sound like small numbers, but they are important if we want to preserve working forests, create local jobs, and develop regional, renewable energy sources.
- Forest biomass energy can represent a significant fraction of the renewable energy standards for electricity generation recently adopted by many Northeastern states if most available forest biomass is reserved for that purpose.
- Regulations and policies must be sustainable. If harvest rates become too high, we could easily see significant degradation of the region's forests and a worsening of greenhouse gas problems.