

OurEnergyPolicy.org (OEP) hosted a discussion focused on the future of biomass and the question of its carbon neutrality. Here is a snapshot of the perspectives offered by OEP's diverse community of vetted experts.



To read the full discussion, please visit: [OurEnergyPolicy.org](http://OurEnergyPolicy.org).

## Key Points: The Role of Biomass

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### Environmental Concerns Beyond Carbon Neutrality:

“Deriving civilization’s energy from the biosphere is actually the furthest thing there is from clean and green and climate friendly. **Many great civilizations of the past collapsed because their energy needs grew to exceed the capacities of their forests and crop lands...**” – [Ike Kiefer](#), Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

“Part of **this discussion should include the impacts of biomass on water consumption**. Specifically, corn grown for ethanol is probably the largest consumer of water per BTU of liquid fuel...” – [Herschel Specter](#), President, Micro-Utilities, Inc.

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### In Support of Biomass:

“Biomass is one of the most important renewable energy options for many fronts... Storing or **neutralizing these wastes are not economic or fully possible**, and **they can meet over 18 percent of US energy needs.**” – [Scott Sklar](#), President, The Stella Group, Ltd.

“**Recognizing biomass as renewable and carbon neutral per IPCC guidelines is consistent with a full accounting of the carbon lifecycle** of individual bioenergy systems.” – [Paul Winters](#), Director of Communications, Biotechnology Innovation Organization

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### Beyond the Binary of Carbon Neutrality:

“This is a nuanced subject and **the designation of biomass as carbon neutral is closer to being accurate** than either of the first two responses here. Everything is carbon neutral or nothing is carbon neutral; it all depends on who is counting and over what time line.” – [Bill Brandon](#), Owner, ISEP Consultants

“Although the legislation mentioned focuses on forest resources, the discussion about carbon neutrality does bleed over into assessment of all regenerative or renewable biomass and into the area of waste utilization... **There are no pat, one-size-fits all answers.**” – [Joanne Ivancic](#), Executive Director, Advanced Biofuels USA

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“Bioenergy and biofuel production creates a long-term market that incentivizes farmers and foresters to sustainably harvest and replant biomass over the long-term. **Over the**

**long-term, there is the opportunity to establish a better balance between carbon emissions and ongoing sequestration, which is impossible with fossil energy.” – Joanne Ivancic, Executive Director, Advanced Biofuels USA**

“Biomass growth and harvesting and burning and ash disposal entail some consumption of fossil fuels... [And] the dramatic reconstitution of millions of acres of ecosystems from natural states to artificial ones has a significant and lasting impact on carbon sequestration. **These impacts should be and have been quantified, and should not be ignored.**” – **Ike Kiefer**, Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

“The fundamental problem that these laws are trying to solve is that **fossil fuel companies are currently allowed to pollute the atmosphere for free** and we are beginning to understand the massive external costs that this pollution is imposing and will impose on society. **I would suggest that rather than make laws that promote supposedly good alternatives to fossil fuels, that instead we put a rising fee on the carbon content of fossil fuels.**” – **Dan Miller**, Managing Director, The Roda Group

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