



To: Ontario Media Outlets

Date: May 20, 2016

**North Bay, ON** - The leak of Ontario's Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change [draft Climate Change Strategy](#) last week is both cause for celebration and for swift criticism.

While it is both necessary and valuable for the province to actually develop a strategy to meet its aggressive GHG emissions targets, the current strategy commits to end Ontario's residential use of natural gas for heating while the Ministry of Energy is actively promoting the expansion of natural gas throughout the province. It includes a narrow solution set of geothermal and electric heat while the Ministry of Northern Development & Mines and the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry actively promote the use of underutilized biomass residues for bioheat. Its stated goal of converting Ontario residences to electric heat in a time when the citizens of Ontario are struggling under the burden of rising electricity costs is both tone-deaf and a non-starter in the north.

It's most glaring omission, however, is that bioheat from renewable wood residues, the optimal solution for heating homes in northern Ontario, is absent from the strategy. Bioheat, and combined heat and power using renewable sustainable biomass, is a key plank in the climate change strategies of virtually every country in the northern hemisphere, and every other province in Canada.

"The irony of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate ignoring bioheat in a province with vast forests, and that is internationally recognized and respected for its sustainable forestry practices is frustrating for northern Ontario communities and businesses. It's doubly ironic as this week Biomass North Development Centre leads a delegation of community leaders, academics, and industry partners to World Bioenergy in Sweden and a bioenergy trade mission in Finland this week with the message that Canada's bioeconomy is open for business," said Dawn Lambe, Executive Director of the Biomass North Development Centre.

"At previous World Bioenergy events, Ontario has been referred to 'the black hole of bioeconomy development'. We had hoped to report to the global community on the progress that Ontario is making to reduce the regulatory barriers to bioheat through modernizing combustion guidelines and streamlining permitting, work currently underway in another branch of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. However, our delegation will likely be asked how Ontario's Climate Change Strategy can ignore the lowest hanging fruit of bioheat in a province with such huge biomass potential. We wish we had a logical answer to give them," she added.

Converting homes to renewable bioheat from sustainable forestry residues would be an optimal solution yielding multiple benefits:

- Drastically reduce GHG emissions from residential heating compared to Business As Usual
- Create thousands of high-value jobs in northern Ontario
- Spur the manufacturing sector in southern Ontario
- Reduce home heating costs in the north by up to 75%
- Develop the infrastructure and supply chains for a robust bioeconomy
- Spur innovation in higher-value bioproducts

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