

SB11-267 Forest Health Act of 2011



Summary

SB11-267 creates the Forest Health Act of 2011, which promotes forest health efforts and creates the Colorado Forest Biomass Use Work Group. It also promotes the creation of sustainable market-based models for active forest management and woody biomass energy development.

Talking Points

- SB11-267 identifies the importance of forest health efforts, and with this emphasis, creates the Colorado Forest Biomass Use Work Group.

- The Colorado State Forest Service will convene the work group, which will prioritize efforts to address critical forested areas and issues in the state. Specifically, the work group will identify:
 - Barriers to the creation of a sustainable, market-based model for active forest management and ecosystem health for Colorado's forests;
 - Ways to support Colorado's forest products industry through effective forest management;
 - Ways to promote the use of biomass to reduce the risk of severe insect and disease outbreaks and catastrophic wildfires;
 - The air quality benefits of using the cogeneration of heat and electricity from biomass as a fuels mitigation strategy versus the open burning of biomass;
 - Currently available and potential public and private sources of funding for the development of biomass markets; and
 - Best forest management practices for watershed management, water supply, and water quality.

The work group will consider and recommend ways to maximize the effectiveness of the CSFS with regard to:

- CSFS will act as an information resource, in coordination with the Department of Natural Resources and the Governor's Energy Office, for persons seeking to utilize woody biomass for energy;
- Creating or updating a map that ranks the relative ability of lands to produce biomass and ranks the counties that are most vulnerable to the risk of catastrophic wildfire;
- Developing or updating an integrated biomass inventory, including public, private, and agricultural lands, and waste feedstock. The inventory will assist in determining the size and type of biomass projects.
- Participation of the CSFS, to the extent allowed by law, in development of federal forest planning policies and processes to advance Colorado's best interests, including the protection of water and utility infrastructure located in national forests, specifically including natural gas, electric, and water infrastructure;

- Use of stewardship contracts by the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management or both to support Colorado's forest products industry by performing services that help achieve land-management goals;
 - Use of Colorado's Good Neighbor Authority, to the greatest extent possible, in forest management projects, including those pursuant to stewardship contracts; and
 - Promoting projects to facilitate use of biomass from Colorado's forests for the cogeneration of heat and electricity in publicly owned facilities when forests are within a reasonable radius of such facilities.
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- The CSFS recently completed a statewide forest resource assessment and strategy, which can inform and guide the efforts of the work group.

 - The CSFS is the lead state agency in activities related to forestry and wildland fire. The CSFS has forestry and natural resource stewardship and management expertise. We also have the institutional and academic support of Colorado State University to apply the best science available to promote forest health efforts.

 - The CSFS supports this legislation and stands ready to provide continued support and leadership in promoting forest health efforts in Colorado.