

Gov. Beshear forms Executive Task Force on Biomass and Biofuels Development in Kentucky

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Contact Information: Jay Blanton
Jill Midkiff
502-564-2611

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Gov. Steve Beshear has signed an Executive Order forming the Executive Task Force on Biomass and Biofuels Development in Kentucky. The 21-member group will work to facilitate the development of a sustainable biomass and biofuels industry in Kentucky.

"I am asking this group to take a hands-on approach in working towards finding viable energy resources that will not only address the future energy needs of Kentucky, but will develop an industry that can revitalize rural and local economies, create jobs, and develop prosperity for the state as it seeks to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions," said Gov. Beshear.

Last November, the Governor unveiled Kentucky's strategic energy plan, *Intelligent Energy Choices for Kentucky's Future*. It establishes specific goals for the development of a biomass and biofuels industry in the Commonwealth.

"To that end, this task force will be the facilitator for developing this industry, using both forestry products and energy crops, which will provide significant economic stimulus within rural communities statewide," said Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary Len Peters.

"Agriculture and forestry will have a significant role in supplying Kentucky's future energy needs," said Roger Thomas, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy. "The work of the task force is critical as we continue addressing increased energy demands."

The Executive Order outlines minimum accomplishments that the task force is to report to the Governor no later than Nov. 30, 2009.

Among the items that task force should accomplish are:

- Validate Kentucky's biomass production capabilities within a sustainable environment;
- Evaluate the status of energy crop and forestry biotechnology and genetics, and recommend a plan of action;
- Validate Kentucky's potential biomass demand;
- Evaluate transportation, logistics, and available business structures in Kentucky;
- Facilitate economic impact analysis; and
- Recommend legislative action to support the development of this industry.

The task force held its first meeting in Frankfort Wednesday to define challenges, validate production capabilities and potential biomass demand, and initiate analysis on logistics, biotechnology and economic impact.

The Task Force members are:

Roger Thomas, Executive Director, Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, Co-chair
Dr. Len Peters, Secretary, Energy and Environment Cabinet, Co-chair
Larry Hayes, Secretary, Economic Development Cabinet
Sen. David Givens – Greensburg
Sen. Johnny Ray Turner - Drift
Sen. Kenneth Winters - Murray
Rep. Dwight Butler - Harned

Rep. Thomas McKee - Cynthiana
Rep. Tanya Pullin – South Shore
Commissioner Richie Farmer, Kentucky Department of Agriculture
Dr. Eric Berson, Chemical Engineering Professor, University of Louisville
Tony Campbell, CEO, East Kentucky Power Cooperative
Terry Cook, State Director, The Nature Conservancy
Dr. Nancy Cox, Associate Dean, UK College of Agriculture
Don Halcomb, Farmer, Simpson County
Mark Haney, President, Kentucky Farm Bureau
Mick Henderson, Agri-Energy Committee, Kentucky Agricultural Council
Dr. Kimberly Holmes, Associate Director, Land Grant, Kentucky State University
Dr. Scott Shearer, Chair, UK Biosystems & Agricultural Engineering
Richard Sturgill, President, Pine Mountain Hardwood Lumber Company
Betty Williamson, President, Kentucky Woodland Owners' Association
Dr. Bruce Pratt, Director, Eastern Kentucky University's Center for Renewable and Alternative Fuel Technologies (CRAFT)

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The Task Force is charged with facilitating the development of a sustainable biomass and biofuels industry in Kentucky that will generate prosperity in a carbon-constrained environment and revitalize rural Kentucky by creating new jobs and strengthening local economies.