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Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak.

My name is Bob Cleaves and I serve as President of the Biomass Power Association. BPA is the Nation's leading voice for biomass to electricity facilities. We use a wide range of organic waste materials—forestry debris, rice hulls, orchard prunings, urban wood—in the generation of grid-connected electricity.

My members have been waiting for two years for a well respected panel of experts to be convened on this important topic. Sadly, in the absence of a national inquiry like we have here today, the issue of biomass and carbon has been hijacked by those who wish to advocate for a narrow renewable energy agenda that is not embraced any other place in the world.

So on behalf of my members and the thousands of workers in the woods and on farms, we thank you for your service and thank EPA for dedicating the resources necessary for you to do this work.

We will leave it up to others to discuss the merits of the debt/dividend approach. Fundamentally, and simply, we believe that so long as carbon stocks are not reduced, bioenergy is favorable from a carbon perspective

But we have two thoughts to leave you with.

First, we ask that you address what is happening in the real world. A little known observation by Manomet -- that is central to their, and your inquiry—is that “all bioenergy technologies—even biomass power compared to natural gas electric—look favorable when biomass wastewood is compared to fossil fuel alternatives.” Manomet points out that ag crops, residues, plantation trees, urban wood—all important and overwhelmingly the source of most bioenergy feedstocks today--were not the focus of their Study as mandated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. That was unfortunate, because the takeaway—that biomass is dirtier than coal—has been an enormously time consuming myth to correct among policy makers and the public generally. In short, do not make the same mistake as Massachusetts.

This panel should undertake an inquiry that is relevant to todays market. Not one of the case studies covers how almost all grid-connected electricity is produced today—from what we call “open-loop” biomass (meaning residues, not natural forests) from a grid-connected, electricity only facility.

The panel's work will be for naught if it focuses, like what Massachusetts asked Manomet to do, on a practice that isn't done in the industry today to any large degree (ie natural forests for energy) or is preoccupied with making pyrolysis and biochar—a business that may have potential but has not yet been fully commercialized. Second, make it simple. With that, I thank you for your work, and welcome the opportunity to follow your deliberations.