



Town of Mammoth Lakes
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March 15, 2023

USFS Pacific Southwest Region (Region 5)
Wood Utilization Program
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 95492-110

Attention Helena Murray, Wood, and Biomass Utilization Specialist

RE: Support for Mono County grant application for the **Wood Innovations Funding Opportunity Program**

Dear Ms. Murray,

The Town of Mammoth Lakes is pleased to support Mono County's application for the planning and permitting for a small-scale bioenergy facility to be located in Mono County under the **Wood Innovations Funding Opportunity Program**. We understand this facility will be a community-scale, bioenergy facility using local sustainably-available forest biomass waste, which will use local labor to the extent it is available and support the regional economy.

A local biomass facility would be a critical asset to the County and region because biomass in the Inyo National Forest and surrounding communities has grown exponentially over the last century due to a combination of fire suppression policies, wildfire, drought, insect and pathogen outbreaks, and climate change. The Mammoth Lakes region, and many other forested communities of Mono County, have considerable forestlands that are currently experiencing significant forest health issues which are all in need of proactive vegetation management treatments.

In addition, recent momentum from unprecedented State funding to support the collaboratively driven [Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project](#), the first large-scale forest restoration project in the region, and the parallel investment from the State in the [Regional Fire and Forest Capacity Program](#), will generate enough available feedstock to make a bioenergy facility commercially viable, which further underscores the need for an appropriately scaled end use for this activity generated material.

Because the removal of excess biomass is a critical part of the solution to forest and ecosystem resilience, and a locally sited biomass facility will demonstrate the ability to use forest biomass

technology at a commercial scale that will help to move this sector forward, the Town of Mammoth Lakes supports this application.

The **Wood Innovations Funding Opportunity Program** is an opportunity to continue to serve as an active partner in the Eastern Sierra on our continued journey to achieve regional resilience. Funding, if awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service, would enable Mono County to serve in a more active role to help solve this longstanding biomass issue that comes from living in these forested landscapes, provide local jobs, cut back on pollution that would otherwise be the result of open burning that is currently the only strategy we have for biomass disposal in the region and no longer a viable strategy as we embark to meet the State of California and Region 5 USFS dual mission of increasing pace and scale of forest restoration by 2025.

Sincerely,

John Wentworth
Mayor