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Todd Brinkmeyer
President and Owner
Plummer Forest Products, Inc
Plummer, Idaho

BEFORE THE

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS AND FOREST HEALTH
COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
Wednesday, June 23, 2004
Room 1334 LHOB, 2:00 p.m.

OVERSIGHT HEARING ON
Developing Biomass Potential: Turning Hazardous Fuels into Valuable Products

Chairman Walden and members of the subcommittee.

I am Todd Brinkmeyer, President and owner of Plummer Forest Products, Inc. located in Plummer, Idaho. Plummer is a small community of 900 residents in the heart of the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation in the panhandle of Idaho, approximately 35 miles south of the city of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

I started Plummer Forest Products in 2000 on the site of a former large log sawmill vacated by Rayonier Company in 1998.

Plummer Forest Products is a fully integrated biomass to energy facility and small log sawmill producing 5 megawatts of electricity and eighty million board feet of lumber per year. We have 85 employees. After struggling for three years of start-up challenges, I can you proudly say that – for now –Plummer Forest Products is a viable enterprise.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the subcommittee today.

As the written submission for the record, I am including a summary of a presentation I have made at the National Bio Energy and Wood Products Conference sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Interior, Agriculture and Energy in Denver, Colorado on January 21, 2004. That presentation provides detail on the history, current configuration and challenges faced by my company as we have sought a way to profitable convert small logs and trees into wood products and energy.

In short, Biomass to energy works, but not as a stand-alone enterprise. The sawmill and energy plant must work together. The cost structure associated with removing woody biomass from the forest, hauling the material to a facility and converting the fiber into a product suitable for electricity production is prohibitive without massive subsidization.

Plummer Forest Products has developed a program that includes removing the woody biomass from the forest by leaving the material attached to a small log segment that can be separated at our facility and further processed into stud lumber and other building materials. By leaving the material attached, the handling cost and freight can be reduced to a level that makes the integrated process viable.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that we can take this model and others like it, refine them and develop a prescription for federal lands that reduces wild fire risk, promotes healthy forests, jobs in rural communities, and does not cost the tax payers money. All the pieces are in place to do that in some area