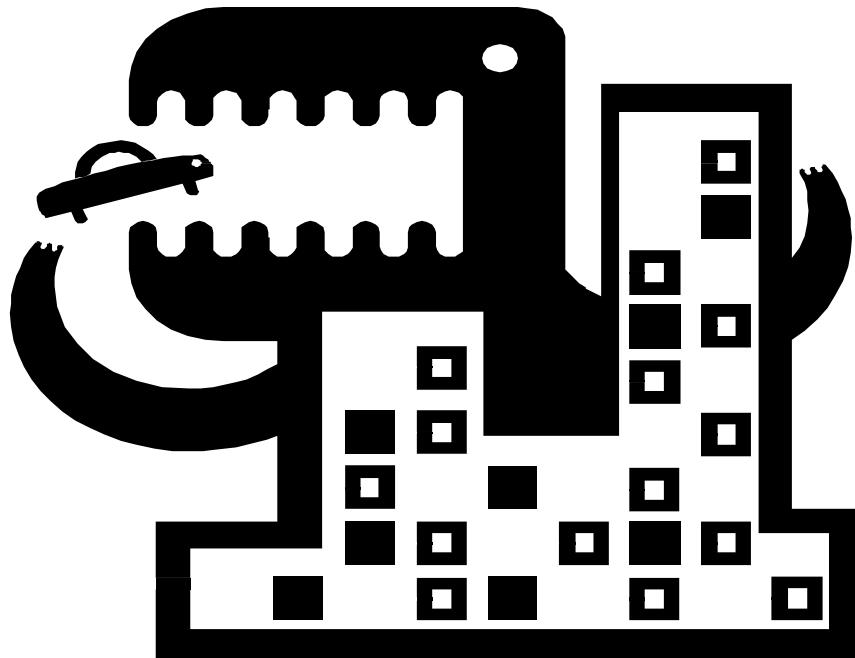


# **BIOMASS FACTS**

**What's included in NC's  
renewable energy portfolio?**



**Biomass energy is not “renewable energy like wind and solar”. If coal is old biomass trapped underground for millions of years, then what is new biomass called?**

## **NEW COAL!**

**Burning new coal releases greenhouse gases just like burning old coal does. Over the short term, the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, regardless of the source of those emissions, continues. Burning carbon strip-mined from forests in the southeast or mountains in the Appalachians adds more carbon to the atmosphere. In fact, burning biomass adds 1.5 times CO<sub>2</sub> per megawatt hour compared to coal. The solution to reducing global warming is to reduce the burning of organic materials and to expand the storage of carbon in forests and soils. It is not to substitute new coal for old coal.**

**(over)**

# THE BIOMASS MENU

Most biomass materials are organic but many include fossil fuel components. Depending on where you live, biomass in your renewable energy portfolio standard could include:

- forest residues, yard wastes
- agricultural waste, energy crops
- animal waste (hog and poultry waste)
- wood waste (including railroad ties, construction debris), pulping liquors
- municipal waste (including plastics), tires, and sewage sludge

## ZERO WASTE for ZERO WARMING

Waste reduction, recycling, re-use and composting organics combined with energy conservation, and truly clean energy like wind and solar will avoid the dangerous consequences of switching from old coal to new coal. A December 2008 study for Massachusetts done by the Tellus Institute concluded that recycling saves energy and reduces global warming. Likewise, the North Carolina Division of Pollution Prevention found that current recycling programs in the state reduce greenhouse gases by the equivalent of over 400,000 cars. Reducing the impact of extraction and consumption and encouraging the protection of forests are the immediate steps that we can take.

*“By destroying resources rather than conserving them, all incinerators, including mass burn, pyrolysis, plasma and gasification, cause significant and unnecessary lifecycle GHG emissions.”*

**We can't burn our way to a cooler climate!**

[www.bredl.org](http://www.bredl.org)

1 Rabl et al., “How to Account for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Biomass in an LCA” The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment 12(5) p. 281. 2007

2 [www.massenvironmentalenergy.org](http://www.massenvironmentalenergy.org)

3 <http://www.energyjustice.net/biomass/>

4 *Assessment of Materials Management Options for the Massachusetts Solid Waste Master Plan Review*, Submitted by the Tellus Institute to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Contract No. EQEH193, [www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/priorities/tellusmmr.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/priorities/tellusmmr.pdf)

5 Brenda Platt and Eric Lombardi, “Stop Trashing the Climate,” *BioCycle*, Vol. 49, No. 8, p. 24, August 2008