

What is Buena Vista Biomass Power?

The Buena Vista Biomass Power facility is a re-powered renewable energy woody biomass electric generation facility capable of reliably generating 18.5 megawatts (MW) of green energy. The renewable energy will provide a sustainable energy resource to approximately 16,000 homes in California and assist the State with achieving its renewable portfolio standard goals. The significant capital investment will create 90 new jobs and tax base to the rural community and Amador County.

The re-powering investment will embrace a modification of the Project's fuel blend to be limited to renewable wood biomass fuel only. In addition, the Project will be equipped with an integrated energy management and emissions control system to meet or exceed best available control technology, in which emissions will be significantly decreased from previous operations.

What types of biomass fuels will the Buena Vista Biomass facility utilize and where will such fuel come from?

The Buena Vista Biomass power generation facility will primarily utilize three sustainable wood biomass sources for fuel, all of which will be sourced within a fifty (50) mile radius from the Project:

1. Forest-sourced biomass from fuels reduction and forest thinning operations;
2. Agriculture waste residuals from orchard removals, pruning, waste shells, and pits; and,
3. Urban wood waste created from local tree trimming, clean woody construction and demolition waste, and pallets.

What are wood biomass fuels?

Wood biomass fuels primarily include waste wood materials that are generated as waste from local municipalities including scrap lumber, paper, and byproducts of wood product manufacturing (sawdust).

Wood biomass materials that have previously been piled and burned, or disposed of in landfills are well suited for biomass power generation fuels. Wood biomass that has been used in California for energy production includes:

- Dead trees or trees severely damaged by natural disaster, disease or insect attack. Agriculture waste residuals from orchard removals, pruning, waste shells, and pits; and,
- Wildfire mitigation operations that remove trees for forest fuel reduction.
- Woody biomass wastes generated from commercial agriculture operations. These include orchard removals and biomass generated from orchard pruning operations.
- Wood waste material generated from urban centers. These include tree trimmings and clean construction and demolition wood.
- Wood waste material generated from wood production manufacturing (sawdust and bark).

What are the benefits of biomass generation?

Biomass power plants are engineered with air pollution control equipment designed to minimize discharges of particulate matter and other pollutants into the atmosphere. All plants are subject to regulation by the State and local governments. In this case, the Buena Vista Biomass power generation facility will be regulated by the Amador Air Pollution Control District and must meet specified air quality standards. While biomass waste materials that come from agricultural operations and forest treatment activities are typically burned in the open, biomass power plants provide an option that can eliminate 95-99 percent of pollutants that would otherwise be produced by the open burning of the biomass, and present an additional benefit by providing alternative to disposing construction and demolition wood waste in a landfill.

What's the planned scale of the Buena Vista Biomass facility?

The Buena Vista Biomass power generation facility will provide 18.5 MW of renewable base-load energy, or approximately enough energy to reliably meet the demands of approximately 16,000 homes in California. Successful biomass projects are typically small-scale electric generation facilities located near agricultural and urban fuel resources, such as Buena Vista, in order to responsibly and reliably access sustainable fuel which would otherwise be burned with uncontrolled emissions or disposed of in landfills.

How many jobs will Buena Vista Biomass facility generate?

The US Department of Energy National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) conducted a study in 1999 that examined biomass facilities in the United States and found that approximately 4.9 full-time jobs were created per MW of power produced by a biomass power plant. The Buena Vista facility is rated at 18.5 MW, which leads to the creation of approximately 90 full-time jobs. A majority (approximately 3/4) of these jobs will be focused on support activities for the facility, which includes processing and transport of biomass fuels. The Project operations will support approximately 17-20 full-time skilled jobs.

When is the Buena Vista Biomass facility expected to come on line?

The Buena Vista Biomass power generation facility is anticipated to commence operations by mid to late 2010.

What economic and social benefits will the Buena Vista Biomass facility bring to the region?

While it is difficult to predict the full economic benefit to the Amador County region, the Buena Vista Biomass facility will create 90 family-wage full-time jobs, and produce clean reliable, carbon-neutral renewable energy. Additionally, the facility will require local regulatory oversight which includes environmental permitting and management. Byproducts created from the facility can be used to create secondary products for use within and for export out of Amador County. The Buena Vista Biomass facility will aggregate social benefits by requiring

local job talent, providing a destination for wood biomass generated as a result of forest fuels reduction activities, divert wood waste from local landfills and supplement local, state and federal tax bases through delivery of annual taxes and regulatory agency fees.

How will the Buena Vista Biomass facility facilitate forest management?

Much of the fuel that supplies the Buena Vista facility will come from local forests located in Amador and surrounding counties. Placing a biomass power generation facility in Buena Vista creates an opportunity to promote sustainable management practices, and provides a market for woody biomass generated as a byproduct of forest management activities. Much of the forest sourced biomass would otherwise be piled and burned.

How will the Buena Vista Biomass facility help protect communities from wildfire?

Hazardous conditions currently exist in many of California's forests on both public and private lands. Forests are overgrown, and prone to catastrophic wildfire events as have been experienced in Northern California in the past decade. The Buena Vista facility provides a means to generate revenues and value to help fund projects that would reduce the amount of dangerous fuels that exist in local forests. Fuel reduction projects would mitigate wildfire risk while improving overall watershed health and restoring forests to a more natural condition.