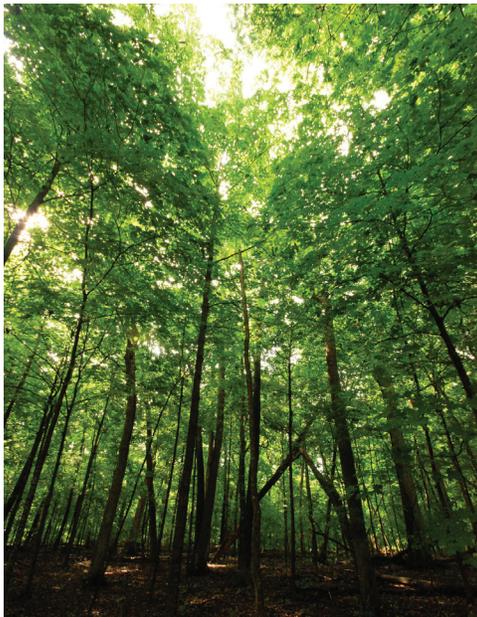


CASE STUDY

Bayfront Biomass



Project Summary

Not all projects are created equal, and when it comes to the sustainable use of our natural resources and the quality of our air, it's important to establish a strong precedent for their long-term protection.

In 2009, Northern States Power Company (NSP) proposed the construct of a biomass gasifier at its Ashland power plant, using woody biomass as fuel. While Clean Wisconsin has supported the development of cellulosic biomass for energy generation, we had concerns about forest sustainability and the net carbon impacts of burning trees for fuel in this particular case. To provide expert testimony regarding our concerns, we retained Dr. David Mladenoff, a professor of forest and wildlife ecology at UW-Madison who has researched and published numerous papers on those topics. In addition, Carl Sinderbrand of Axley Brynson represented Clean Wisconsin in that case.

This docket was important because it was the first time Wisconsin regulators addressed the issues we raised in the case. We anticipated that more biomass projects would be proposed and wanted to ensure that each regulatory review included, at a minimum, these questions. As a result of our work, the PSC imposed several conditions on the approval of the project, such as:

1. The contracts that NSP writes with the harvesters supplying fuel for Unit 5 shall require compliance with the 2008 Forestland Woody Biomass Harvesting Guidelines, including updates to the guidelines as they are developed. NSP shall ensure that these contracts include penalty provisions in the event there is a failure to comply with the guidelines.
2. NSP shall track sites where harvesters obtain woody residues or round wood for Units 1, 2 or 5 and shall provide biomass fuel reports to the Commission and DNR on a quarterly basis.
3. NSP shall devote resources to support research on the efficacy of the guidelines and research that is likely to produce demonstrable benefits to the guidelines.

Ultimately, NSP withdrew its application to construct the biomass gasifier due to cost overruns, but the case set a valuable precedent for how biomass projects would be evaluated.

Project Details

Date 2009

Location Ashland, Wis.

Project Type Power Plant



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