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BC Bioenergy Network Invests \$135,000 to Fill Gaps in Bioenergy Research in the Forest Sector

VANCOUVER, BC – January 26, 2010 – The BC Bioenergy Network (“BCBN”), a provincially funded leader supporting the growing bioenergy sector in British Columbia, today announced a \$135,000 investment with the BC Forestry Climate Change Working Group (BC Working Group). The funding, which is matched by industry contributions, will enable the Working Group to develop a comprehensive understanding of the forest fibre opportunity for bioenergy production, particularly given the impact of climate change and other management risks such as forest fires and pine beetles, and help position B.C. as a world leader in forest-based bioenergy production.

The BC Working Group initiative will:

- Improve the information base describing the carbon cycle in B.C. forests and forest products (via Life Cycle Assessment or LCA) and the related opportunities to contribute to climate change mitigation by sequestering and storing more carbon and avoiding greenhouse gas emissions by substituting wood for non-renewable fossil fuels. The latter involves using more forest-based fibre to generate clean bioenergy.
- Improve the information available on specific bioenergy opportunities and the barriers to making B.C. a world leader in developing and marketing wood-to-bioenergy and other bioenergy technologies, and recommending how best to address them.

“This initiative will support the development of innovative bioenergy solutions that will create jobs and support economic diversification in B.C. communities,” said Blair Lekstrom, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. “Clean energy derived from wood waste will help the province to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and become a clean energy powerhouse.”

“Science is one of the cornerstones for building a stronger bioenergy sector for British Columbia,” said Forests and Range Minister Pat Bell. “This research investment will help us achieve B.C.’s climate goals and objectives as well as more economic value from wood biomass.”

“Understanding and improving awareness of the role of forest products and bioenergy in addressing climate change among B.C., national and international stakeholders is key to making progress in this area,” said David Gandossi, co-chair of the BC Working Group and executive vice-president of Mercer International. “We have an opportunity to positively impact the most pressing environmental issue of our time, while at the same time bringing hope and opportunity to communities across British Columbia. Through this initiative, we are seeking the information we need to move forward.”

“We are very excited to help support the development of sound bioenergy and biofuel policies,” said Michael Weedon, Executive Director of the BC Bioenergy Network. “Policies that lead to the full utilization of biomass and fibre within a globally competitive, integrated and sustainable forest sector, are good policies for all British Columbians.”

About the BC Bioenergy Network

Established in April 2008 with a \$25-million grant from the B.C. government, the BC Bioenergy Network is an industry-led association that acts as a catalyst for deploying near-term bioenergy technologies and organizing mission-driven research for the development and demonstration of sustainable to build a world class bioenergy capability in BC. For more information about the BCBN, visit www.bcbioenergy.ca.

About the BC Forestry Climate Change Working Group (BC Working Group)

Established in 2008 and representing over 90% of the province's forest-based manufacturing capacity, the BC Working Group was formed to facilitate a single industry voice on BC climate change policy and related binational and international initiatives. Working in partnership with government, the Working Group helped create the joint vision for the sector in a "carbon constrained future world", and provides strategic advice on how best to achieve it. The vision is as follows:

BC forest sector: a global leader in climate change mitigation and supplier of choice of climate-friendly products and services from the forest.

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