

Keep Biomass Alive and Well for Vermont Forests and Farms

Support S.161

The Value of Biomass Power in Ryegate

The wood-fired biomass power plant located in Ryegate is important to Vermont’s economy. This plant burns wood chips and produces green, local electricity. Another thing it produces is **wood ash**, which comes from the combustion of the wood chips – just like your home wood stove produces wood ash after burning wood. This **wood ash** “by-product” is a valuable organic fertilizer for farmers throughout Vermont.



It may not seem like a big deal to most people, but the **wood ash** from this biomass plant is a very important **locally produced natural organic-approved fertilizer** which is used by many Vermont farmers annually. Farms have come to rely on the potassium and lime value from wood ash as a cornerstone for improved soil fertility and higher crop yields.



It is easy to focus on loggers, haulers, foresters, and power plant operators which would be impacted by the loss of the Ryegate plant – but from our perspective it is also the **farmers** that would lose. Farmers rely on the wood ash to help keep fields healthy, and farms viable.

Farmers often practice woodlot management, and their low-grade wood is chipped and shipped to the biomass power plant, and the resulting wood ash is delivered back to the farm for fertilizing fields. It is a wonderful green loop of recycling. **If the Ryegate power plant is shut down, farmers will lose access to clean wood ash fertilizer for their fields!**

Since 2010, RMI has recycled just over 41,000 tons of wood ash from the Ryegate biomass plant. We hope to continue this beneficial program for the next decade!

Losing the Ryegate power plant would be terrible for Vermont. Hopefully this legislature will continue to focus attention on the path forward to keep the Ryegate biomass plant operating and producing clean, local power for Vermont, with the added benefit of **wood ash** for Vermont farmers.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelagh Connelly, President
Resource Management, Inc. (RMI)

*RMI recycles the wood ash for the Ryegate power plant

