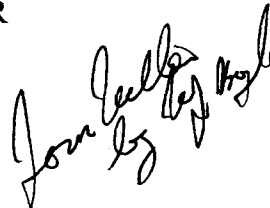


**MEMORANDUM**  
OFFICE OF THE  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
COUNTY OF PLACER

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors  
FROM: Thomas Miller, County Executive Officer  
DATE: April 18, 2006



SUBJECT: Approve the Fire Safe/Biomass Program and Authorize the County Executive Officer to Sign a contract not-to-exceed \$100,000 for a Biomass Manager and Program Support.

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**ACTION REQUESTED**

Approve the fire Safe/Biomass Program authorize the County Executive Officer to negotiate and sign a contract not to exceed \$100,000 for a Biomass Manager in support of this effort.

**BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to your Board's direction at the recent Strategic Planning Workshop, this item is being brought forward for your consideration and approval. One of your Board's designated priorities concerns reducing the wildfire threat in Placer and the reutilization of woody biomass in an economically sustainable and practical fashion.

Because of the existing regulatory hurdles and the need for coordination amongst those agencies with related responsibilities which include: federal, state and local fire entities; local fire safe councils; the fire safe alliance; the need to support and develop legislative proposals; the need for comprehensive air quality regulatory clarity, particularly with determining the possible location of a biomass facility; seeking grant funds; and, the need for technical forestry assistance, the effort required a more robust and dedicated management structure.

For the past several months the Executive Office has assembled a team to manage and move forward with your direction. Participation has been on-going from HHS, Air Pollution Control as well as CEO staff. The efforts of this group have been formatted into the below listed three main functional areas with the designated staff leads:

Fire Safe Alliance and Councils – Don Nelson/CEO/OES (contract)

Legislation – Mary Herdegen/CEO (internal staff)

Biomass – Tom Amesbury/HHS (contract).

As is the subject of this staff report, the three main functional areas are to be overseen by the contracted position of Biomass Manager. This position, reporting to Assistant

**Board of Supervisors  
Authorize County Executive Officer  
Biomass Manager  
April 18, 2006  
Page 2 of 2**

County Executive Officer, Holly Heinlein, would provide management oversight and coordination of all related activities. Providing policy guidance would be a Policy Advisory Group consisting of Supervisor Kranz, Supervisor Holmes, CEO Tom Miller, Assistant CEO Mike Boyle, and Assistant CEO Holly Heinzen. In addition, and as needed, a technical committee will be assembled to provide required assistance.

Attached is a draft scope of work and a proposed Fire Safe/Biomass Program organizational structure. When negotiations are completed, the form of the contract will be subject to approval by County Counsel.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

It is recommended that you authorize the County Executive Officer with a not-to-exceed authority of \$100,000, utilizing existing HR 2389 funds.

#### **Attachments**

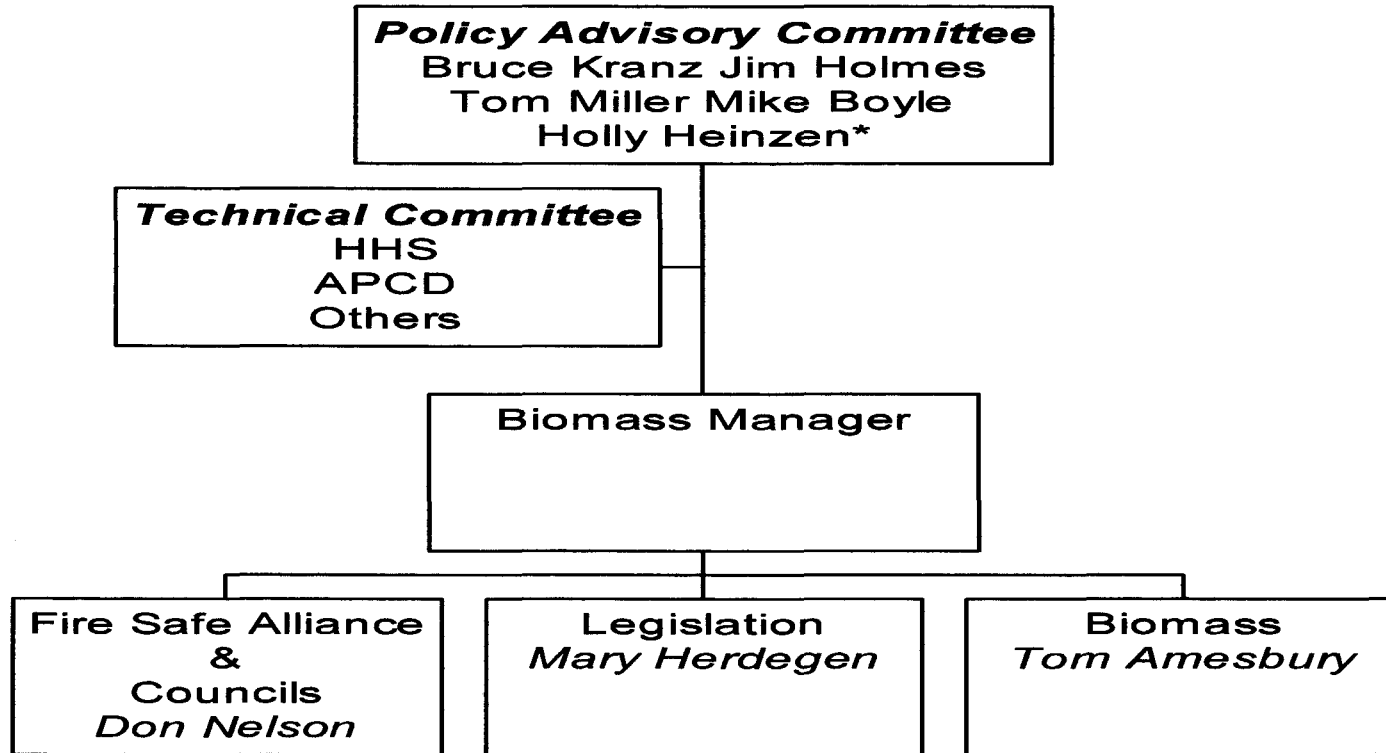
- Proposed Organizational Chart
- Draft Scope of Work

c: Holly Heinzen, Assistant County Executive Officer  
Lori Walsh, Assistant Personnel Director

DRAFT CONCEPT PAPER

INTERNAL PLACER COUNTY ORGANIZATION

**Placer County Fire Safe Organization**



\* Holly Heinzen responsible for CEO's program implementation

DRAFT

March 27, 2006

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**POSITION DESCRIPTION  
And  
SCOPE OF WORK  
For  
CONTRACTED POSITION**

**County Executive Office – Biomass Manager**

**Program Goals**

This contracted position is part of an overriding goal to create safer communities by removing hazardous flammable materials from federal lands thereby reducing the threat and severity of future wildfires.

Other beneficial consequences from reducing flammable forest products include: creating economically sustainable streams of materials to reutilize the removed forest products; reducing the need for the current practice of federally authorized burning of forest products thereby improving air quality; and, preventing deterioration of Lake Tahoe's renowned water clarity from post-fire erosion.

**Position Description**

Under direction from the County Executive Office, as part of an overall effort to reduce the potential of a catastrophic wildfire in adjacent national forests, the position of Biomass Manager is a contracted position to oversee and coordinate Placer County's efforts to determine the feasibility and options for removing flammable wood products from national forest lands and turning those products into economically sustainable forms of energy production or to other beneficial uses. The position will report to Assistant County Executive Officer, Holly Heinzen.

**Placer County's Initiatives**

Placer County currently has three programmatic components directed at this effort, Fire Safe Councils, Legislation and Biomass Utilization.

**Fire Safe Councils**

These grass roots community entities are comprised of local residents and government agencies collaborating in various ways to help make communities safer from wildfires. Activities include: homeowner education to create less vulnerable home sites; home inspections to assess potential dangers and nearby fuel loads; better street and residential signage; preparation of community wildfire plans; and, seeking grant funding. Mr. Don Nelson currently manages this effort under contract.

### Legislation

The county has supported several legislative changes seeking to provide regulatory relief allowing the more rapid removal of fire-killed trees that still have merchantable value. The county also supports legislation aimed at expediting post-fire restoration and replanting of trees. This effort is managed within the County Executive's Office by county staff and contracted legislative advocacy firms. This position reports to Assistant County Executive Officer, Holly Heinzen.

### Biomass Reutilization

This component, also known as Woody Biomass Utilization, is directed at exploring options to create viable uses for removed forest products, whether pre- or post-wildfire. While current federal practices allow a limited amount of forest thinning and development of fuel breaks, the forests remain extremely vulnerable to damaging fires because of the over accumulation of trees and woody biomass. Options preliminarily researched by Placer County include cogeneration and fermentation processes using woody biomass. A licensed forestry contractor will manage this portion of the effort. Biomass initiatives may also include utilization of agricultural bi-products such as rice hulls. Placer County Health and Human Services Department has a contract with Mr. Tom Amesbury to assist in this portion of the program.

### Program Management Responsibilities

The desired manager for this oversight position will have a record of successful program or project management experience with a demonstrated history of problem solving, collaboration with diverse groups and product delivery. The selected manager will have excellent report writing and presentation skills. Deliverables include:

1. Provide overall leadership and coordination with the three existing programmatic areas to produce a comprehensive analysis of the issues and identify strategies and options for the removal of woody biomass from federal lands and reutilization of those products.
2. Identify potential private commercial parties with interests in biomass utilization and explore implementation strategies.
3. Develop strategies designed to overcome existing regulatory hurdles to achieve program goals. In particular, coordinate with Placer County Air Pollution Control District in regards to possible sites and permitting.
4. Develop an economic analysis of potential scenarios.

5. Identify and procure grant or demonstration funding where applicable and if available.
6. Coordinate and serve as lead staff to Biomass Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee.
7. Develop and present to the County Executive Office, other related initiatives having the potential to move the program forward.
8. Develop and initiate a 5-year "Biomass Utilization Strategic Plan".