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**Pellet Fuels Institute Announces Humboldt State University  
Partnership Funded by U.S. Department of Energy**

*DOE Grants \$5.8 Million to California University to Study Bioenergy Technology*

**Arlington, Virginia – May 13, 2014** – The Pellet Fuels Institute announced today that it is part of a team led by California's Humboldt State University (HSU) awarded a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) grant that will be used to conduct a joint study on bioenergy technology. The \$5.8 million grant, one of the largest ever received by HSU, is part of the Biomass Research and Development Initiative, a collaborative effort between the DOE and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that supports renewable energy research in the rural United States.

"We at the Pellet Fuels Institute are thrilled to be part of this initiative which will work to explore and expand biomass utilization from existing forest residues," said Jennifer Hedrick, Executive Director of Pellet Fuels Institute. "We are grateful to DOE and USDA and look forward to working with the talented professors and staff at Humboldt State University and other members of the team including PFI member Forest Business Network."

PFI, one of 15 partner organizations chosen by the university, will support two projects funded by this research, both relating to "briquetting," or the process of densifying forest residues into compact, energy efficient portions for use in biomass thermal applications.

"Some of the major barriers to utilizing forest residues are related to the high cost of collecting, processing, and transporting feedstock to conversion locations," says the project's lead principal investigator, HSU Forestry Professor Han-Sup Han. "This study will take innovative approaches that cost-effectively handle forest residues and produce quality feedstocks in the woods. Furthermore, removing forest residues helps reduce fire risk, supports forest restoration efforts and rural communities and prepares for planting trees."

In the first, two-year project, PFI will assess the adaptability of existing commercial biomass briquetting equipment for use as a field deployable system. The mobile system would be usable in or near woods to process a variety of forest residue types; rather than hauling residues to a facility for processing, this technology would enable manufacturers to densify residues on the spot, allowing for enhanced ease and efficiency of transport. PFI will address issues inherent in creating a field deployable system, including the necessary support and material handling equipment.

For the second project, also slated to last two years, PFI will conduct a comparison of the logistics, output and economics of on-site versus mobile briquetting units. This study will aim to identify strategies to improve the economics of forest biomass utilization.

"Due to the high cost of collection and transportation, woody biomass is a promising but widely untapped source of renewable energy," says another of the project's leaders,

director of HSU's Schatz Energy Research Center Arne Jacobson. "One of the goals of our research is to investigate mobile biomass conversion technologies, which will reduce the cost associated with the transportation of woody biomass and increase the value of processed products by converting forest residue at or near field collection sites."

Through this research, Humboldt State University intends to aid the development of bioenergy and biobased products through effective utilization of forest residues. The increased use of forest residues for energy will have a positive impact on the U.S. forest and energy sectors by reducing U.S. dependence on imported energy, improving the environment and promoting economic development in rural, forest dependent communities, particularly in the Western regions of the country.

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*The Pellet Fuels Institute (PFI) is a North American trade association based in Arlington, Virginia, that represents a range of contributors to the pellet industry, including companies that manufacture wood pellets and pellet manufacturing equipment, or provide other products and services to the densified biomass industry at large. To learn more, please visit PFI's website at [www.pelletheat.org](http://www.pelletheat.org).*