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Pellet Fuels Institute Addresses High Pellet Demand

Arlington, VA – March 14, 2014 – Pellet Fuels Institute Executive Director Jennifer Hedrick issued the following statement today to address high pellet fuel demand experienced in the Northeast in recent weeks:

“This winter, several conditions have combined to lead to higher demand for pellets than what has been considered normal over the last few years. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that the average temperature for the contiguous United States was 31.3 degrees – the coldest in four years. The extreme and persistent cold weather has required many residential pellet appliance owners to use a greater volume of pellets than they would during an average winter, causing a lower availability of pellets in some areas as we approach the end of winter.

“Americans are increasingly turning to pellet appliances to heat their homes. Especially during a colder than normal winter that causes higher fossil fuel heating costs, pellet fuels are efficient and considerably more affordable than electricity and fossil fuels such as heating oil. It is encouraging that so many people are realizing the benefits that pellet heat delivers. According to the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association, pellet appliance shipments – including stoves, furnaces, and inserts, for example – increased twelve percent over the last year.

“Well over one million homeowners in the United States rely on domestically produced wood pellet heat, and while this number grows every year, the Pellet Fuels Institute manufacturer members nationwide still have ample production capacity to meet that growing need.

“Although previous winters were marked with nearly universal pellet fuel surpluses, pellet plant operators cannot predict the severity and duration of each winter and perfectly match supply with demand. While some parts of the country experienced shipping delays, overall the U.S. had capacity available, just not always at the right place, price or time for all parts of the country.

“While many competing heat sources such as propane and fuel oil saw similar, if not compounded product delays and shortages, we don’t believe any homeowner should be without pellet fuel.

“Our members and other industry providers are already looking ahead and working together with dealers, retailers and consumers to strengthen logistics and inventories for coming years.

“The Pellet Fuels Institute appreciates the trust that so many consumers place in this growing industry. We urge consumers and retailers to plan ahead when possible, and purchase pellets at times of lower demand, like spring and summer, to not only assure their supply, but to aid in planning for any eventuality.”

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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.