Forest Biomass and Wildfire

• Wildfire and Tree Mortality Crisis
• Governor’s Emergency Proclamation
• Status of Biomass Facilities
• What Needs to be Done Next
The Perfect Storm

• Excess forest fuel + drought + reduced snow pack
• Climate change worsens all of these
• More acres lost to wildfire in past 5 years than in previous 70
• Wildfire causes 2/3 of CA’s black carbon emissions
• Bark beetle epidemic
• 30 million dead trees now – may be 60 million next year
Status of Existing Facilities

- 24 biomass plants produce about 600 MW of electricity
- 7 plants have closed in the past year
- 7 more have contracts that expire in the next 6 months
- More than half of the remaining plants may close in the next few years
- 2 small-scale facilities, but no new ones built in past 3 years
Governor’s Emergency Proclamation

- Issued October 30, 2015
- Identify High Hazard Zones
- Remove dead and dying trees
- Identify storage areas and state facilities that can use wood chips or mulch
- Expand practice of prescribed burns
- Waives CEQA for these activities
Emergency Proclamation and Biomass Facilities

- CPUC must use its authority to extend contracts with existing facilities
  - CPUC issued Resolution E-4770
  - Requires at least 50 MW for facilities taking HHZ fuel
  - 20 MW in PG&E, 20 MW in SCE and 10 MW in SDG&E territory
  - Fuel must be 40% HHZ in 2016, 50% HHZ in 2017, 60% HHZ in 2018 and 80% HHZ after that
Emergency Proclamation (cont’d)

• Expedite contracts for new facilities
  ➢ BioMAT - 50 MW from forest biomass facilities that are smaller than 3 MW each
  ➢ CPUC Staff Proposal issued in February
  ➢ No decision yet on revised rules

• Facilitate interconnection agreements for new projects
  ➢ No information / proposal released yet
What Needs to Be Done

• CEC - $27 million in EPIC funding for forest biomass projects
• Governor has proposed $150 million from Cap and Trade revenues for healthy forests, including biomass to energy facilities
• CPUC must require utilities to renew contracts and change BioMAT for new facilities
• Need long-term policy to maintain and expand forest biomass facilities – RPS, renewable gas policy, long-term funding, etc.
• Need forest goals in Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Strategy
• Need counties to support Baseload Coalition efforts
THANK YOU

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