



Midwestern States Launch Biobased Procurement Initiative

The Midwestern Governors Association took action in November to promote biobased products in their *Energy Security and Climate Stewardship Summit* agreement. The agreement includes a resolution to jointly establish a Midwestern Biobased Product Procurement System to support the growth of the region's bioeconomy. The System goal is to create a common approach to listing biobased products consistent with the federal Biopreferred® program, with System members listing biobased products based on their own procurement rules.

Signatories to the Summit agreement include the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin and the Canadian province of Manitoba. The resolution also calls for creation of a regional task force of state procurement officials and others to design the rules of a regional biobased product system and make other recommendations as necessary. The task force will also work with the public and private sectors to oversee and implement the System as well as develop and recommend model rules by July 1, 2008.

The Great Plains Institute's Brendan Jordan said the genesis of state-level efforts stemmed from the *Powering the Plains* roadmap developed to identify measures and institutional arrangements needed to implement a transition inter-jurisdictionally over time. Jordan said the goal is "by 2015, the region will have established efficient biobased product procurement systems for state governments. Most states see biobased procurement as 'low hanging fruit' because the federal program is already in place and states can often easily adopt the federal program."

There are three key elements of the roadmap: 1) adopt biobased product procurement rules at the state level, which may mean simply adopting the federal rules; 2) create a regional product list and consistent set of rules to encourage regional collaboration; and, 3) expand the program further by creating a regional biobased product certification program and promoting through incentives and education.

The Energy Summit's Advanced Transportation Fuels, and Biobased Products Working Group established goals and objectives to advance the bioeconomy. This included building the

infrastructure to allow the bioeconomy to expand. The policy options also called for development of the Midwestern infrastructure for the manufacture of biobased products and development of Midwestern biobased products. They planned for adoption of biobased product procurement rules at the state level and participation in a regional biobased product procurement program with a common list of products.

Representative Dave Winters of Illinois explains his reasons for sponsoring biobased procurement legislation in Illinois, "I'm a farmer myself and not only does this expand the market for agricultural products, but the state can serve as a model in showing biobased products are readily available, can meet performance requirements and are often cost competitive."

Illinois HB 0634, sponsored by Representative Winters, modifies Illinois Procurement Code to give preference to contractors using biobased products, provided the cost is no more than 5 percent greater. Biobased products are defined as in the federal BioPreferred program and the program went into effect January 1, 2008.

Arkansas, Indiana and North Dakota have also passed legislation, establishing varying levels of preference for the use of biobased products. North Dakota's law encourages the state Office of Management and Budget, institutions of higher education, and other institutions to purchase biobased. Indiana's law, introduced as HB 1281 and sponsored by Representative Erik Koch, requires state agencies to purchase biobased products if they are available at the time of the purchase and it is economically feasible to purchase them. The law allows for some exceptions under certain circumstances. Arkansas' law requires state agencies to give purchasing preference to biobased products.

For more on the Arkansas and Indiana legislation, see the [Spring 2007](#) issue of Biobased Solutions for Government.