

# SIERRA STAR

## North Fork biomass plant adds \$900,000 in funding

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A biomass energy facility planned for the North Fork area was awarded \$900,000 through multiple financial agencies, officials announced Friday.

North Fork Community Power, a public-private partnership between North Fork Community Development Council (NFCDC) and Phoenix Energy, is working on the development and construction of the biomass gasification facility in the area.

The project will utilize sustainably harvested forest biomass to produce clean energy, reduce carbon-dioxide emissions and produce biochar, a carbon based soil amendment, as a byproduct..

Construction of the plant will begin in early 2016 with commercial operations commencing in 2017, depending on when interconnection upgrades are complete.

“With the devastation created by the tree mortality in the Sierra, small scale biomass facilities like this one will be an important alternative to pile burning for forest waste disposal,” said Dan Rosenberg, President of the NFCDC. “Additionally, we will create badly needed jobs in the local community.”

This funding, provided by New Markets Tax Credit Fund, LLC of the Central Valley and JP Morgan Chase Bank, is in addition to the \$4.9 million awarded to the project through the California Energy Commission’s EPIC grant program, and will help cover additional equipment and interconnection costs.

“New Markets Tax Credits are expected to become part of the capitalization strategy for projects in the emerging distributed forest biomass power market. This first deal is a big step for the industry,” said Angie Lottes, from The Watershed Research and Training Center. “We’re excited that this might be a model for community finance in forested areas.”

This project is being supported and developed by a team of non-governmental organizations, agencies, and private companies, including NFCDC, Phoenix Energy, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Sierra Resource Conservation District, TSS Consultants, UC Merced, The Watershed Research and Training Center, and Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council.

A complete feasibility study for the project was provided through a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant.

*NORTH FORK COMMUNITY POWER*