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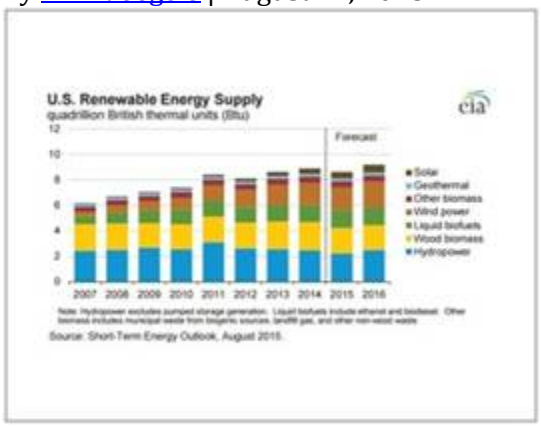
EIA short-term outlook highlights bioenergy production forecasts

By Erin Voegele | August 11, 2015



U.S. Energy Information Administration

The U.S. Energy Information Administration has released the August edition of its Short-Term Energy Outlook, predicting total renewables used in the electric power generation sector will decrease by 2.6 percent this year. Conventional hydropower is expected to decrease by 9.9 percent, with non-hydropower renewable power generation expected to increase by 4.5 percent. Total renewables consumption for electric power and heat generation is forecast to decrease by 4 percent this year and increase by 7.6 percent next year.

The U.S. is expected to generate 117,000 MWh per day of electricity this year from wood biomass, down from 118,000 MWh per day last year. In 2016, generation from wood biomass is expected to increase to 119,000 MWh per day. Electricity generation from waste biomass is expected to reach 59,000 MWh per day this year, up from 58,000 MWh per day last year. Next year, electricity production from waste biomass is expected to increase to 60,000 MWh per day.

The electric power sector is expected to consume 0.245 quadrillion Btu (quad) of wood biomass this year, down from 0.247 quad last year. Next year, the sector is expected to consume 0.253 quad of wood biomass. The electric power sector is also expected to consume 0.264 quad of waste biomass this year, up from 0.26 quad last year, increasing to 0.272 quad in 2016.

The industrial sector is expected to consume 1.239 quad of wood biomass this year, down from 1.317 quad last year. Consumption of wood biomass is expected to continue to fall next year, reaching 1.186 quad. The sector is also expected to consume 0.185 quad of waste biomass, up from 0.183 quad last year, increasing to 0.188 quad next year.

The commercial sector is expected to consume 0.075 quad of wood biomass and 0.047 quad of waste biomass this year. Last year, the sector consumed 0.071 quad of wood biomass and 0.046 quad of waste biomass. Moving into 2016, the commercial sector is expected to consume 0.077 quad of wood biomass and 0.048 quad of waste biomass.

The residential sector is expected to consume 0.447 quad of wood biomass this year, down from 0.58 quad last year. Next year, the residential sector is expected to consume 0.418 quad of wood biomass.

Across all sectors, the U.S. is expected to consume 2.005 quad of wood biomass this year, down from 2.214 quad last year. Consumption is expected to fall to 1.933 quad in 2016. Across all sectors, the U.S. is also expected to consume 0.498 quad of waste biomass this year, up from 0.488 quad last year. Next year, consumption of waste biomass is expected to increase to 0.508 quad.

During the final week of July, the EIA released its Electric Power Monthly report, which includes data for May. The report shows net generation from wood and wood-derived fuels was down 1.6 percent in May when compared to the same month of the prior year, falling to 17.06 million MWh. Generation from other forms of biomass also dropped by 2.2 percent, falling to 8.41 million MWh.

During the first five months of the year, U.S. total electricity generation from biomass was down 1.8 percent when compared to the same period of 2014. According to the EIA, generation from biomass reached 25.47 million MWh during the five-month period of this year, down from 25.94 million MWh during the same period of last year.

The report also notes the U.S. added 53.7 MW of biomass capacity in May, bringing total U.S. biomass capacity to 13,562.9 MW. All 53.7 MW of new capacity came from wood and wood waste biomass. According to the EIA, an additional 298 MW of biomass capacity is expected to be added over the next 12 months, with 134.3 MW of that capacity from wood and wood waste biomass, 40.1 MW from landfill gas, 85 MW from municipal solid waste (MSW), and 38.6 MW from other waste biomass.

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