

## FAQ

### **What is the small-scale wood heat initiative?**

The small-scale wood heat initiative involves converting fossil fuel-based, heating systems in select public buildings to wood chip heating systems. This will also involve long-term arrangements with private sector wood heat service providers.

### **Why are you doing this?**

This initiative supports the local forest community and there are economic and societal benefits that come with using a renewable resource including:

- Supporting a robust rural forest economy
- Maintaining and creating jobs, including those required in a new wood heat service sector
- Replacing imported fossil fuel with locally sourced renewable fuel, thereby keeping local dollars circulating within provincial economy
- Mitigating carbon dioxide over the longer term
- Supporting a healthy and biodiverse forest for all Nova Scotians

It is also supported by a recommendation (#35) in the Forestry Review by Professor Lahey.

### **What will the primary source of fuel be?**

The wood heat initiative is designed to assist in developing markets for lower grade primary forest fibre. This will help provide managers of private woodlands more economic options and support their efforts to sustainably manage their forest lands.

### **What kind of emissions will this produce?**

Carbon dioxide is emitted when wood is burned to heat buildings and is eventually recaptured by growing plant life through photosynthesis. Replacing the emissions

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associated with the extraction, transport and burning of fossil fuels with those from using local, renewable wood with a carbon-efficient supply chain and high efficiency combustion technology will result in decreased emissions overall over the longer term.

### **How much wood will be used to heat public buildings?**

The annual quantity of wood to heat the public buildings is expected to be between 300 to 2,000 tonnes (equivalent to 12 to 80 tractor-trailer truckloads) of fuel chips per building. The total volume of wood fuel used throughout the province would depend on the number of buildings transitioned to wood heat. Nova Scotia has a significant amount of lower grade primary wood fibre that is more than enough to meet the expected demands of the program.

### **Will wood pellets be used?**

Initially, this program will focus on wood chips which can be produced in all areas of the province. Wood chips should also be more cost-effective than pellets for many larger facilities. Pellets are already used in some government facilities.

### **Who will run the heat systems?**

The heat system will be housed in a building outside a given public facility. The system will be designed, built, owned, operated and maintained by the successful private sector wood heat service provider, which will be selected based on an open procurement process. The wood heat service provider will enter into a long-term heat contract with the public owned facility.

### **What type of wood heat systems could be deployed?**

There are a variety of highly efficient modern heating systems that have already proven themselves in the North American and European markets. In fact, PEI and Ontario have

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systems in place. In Nova Scotia, we will set the standard requirements to be met, and wood heat service providers will employ high efficiency/low emissions systems.

### **Can Nova Scotia woodlot owners get involved?**

Wood heat service providers will need to show how they will access the appropriate wood supply from local private sector woodlot sources. Woodlot owners can become aware of opportunities by maintaining contact with local woodlot groups and by direct contact with wood heat service providers.

### **How will you keep people informed of the progress on this initiative?**

As the selection and implementation process proceeds, the department will provide updates and solicit feedback from stakeholders and other interested groups.

### **What's the status of the initiative?**

The wood heat initiative is being coordinated by an interdepartmental task group led by the Department of Lands and Forestry, with key involvement from the departments of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and Energy and Mines. A procurement process for wood heat service providers for about 6 buildings across the province is scheduled to start during August 2019 (phase 1). A selection of potential buildings across the province will be identified in subsequent phases.

### **How will the procurement process proceed?**

The procurement process will be divided into two stages. The first will be the Request for Supplier Qualifications (RFSQ) and will prequalify proponents according to their experience and expertise. This selected group will then be invited to respond to the technical and more detailed Request for Proposal (RFP).

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**How are facilities being selected?**

The initial building sites will be selected based on criteria that includes efficiency and age of the current oil heat system, heating requirements of the building, land availability, and site and services acceptability.

**How is this small-scale wood heat initiative different from combined heat and power plants in Nova Scotia?**

The purpose of this wood heat initiative is to provide space heating and hot water to public facilities and will not be used to generate electricity. In most cases, buildings with medium-sized heat loads will require less than 500 tonnes (equivalent to about 20 tractor-trailer truckloads) of wood chips annually.

**How much will it cost to change over these systems?**

We are currently in the planning stages of the initiative. The cost estimates will depend on the number of sites selected and the results of the procurement process.

**When do expect to have the first systems actually changed over?**

We are currently in the planning stages of the initiative. We will have a better sense of overall timelines once the province completes the procurement phase. The goal is to have phase 1 systems in place in advance of the 2020/21 heating season.