Patrick Sherren, representing Metzler Forest Products LLC
Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Good afternoon legislators, staff and fellow attendees. I'm Pat Sherren, the Director of New Product Development at Metzler Forest Products; and I've been asked by the US Biochar Coalition to make a statement representing myself and Metzler.

I graduated from West Virginia University in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Resource Management as an unlikely forester who secured a coveted forester job at Westvaco's Luke Maryland papermill, where I navigated 5 mergers and buyouts to develop new fiber supply areas, new fiber supply sources, to work on special projects critical to the mill's operation, and finally being the last chip buyer before the mill's closure June 2019. A large part of the new fiber supply areas and sources were developed through my relationship with Alan Metzler.

Alan and Jill Metzler started our 2-generation run family business with one cable skidder and one pickup truck in 1987. We are now 90 strong operating all over the Mid-Atlantic region providing timber harvesting and forestry services, land clearing and grubbing, custom chipping and grinding, soils, mulches, composts and biochar products.

In August 2019, Alan said he and others at Metzler had crazy ideas and no time to chase them down, and asked if I was interested in chasing down those ideas. I said absolutely, and the great biochar adventure started!

A quick search on the Google machine may cause you to think biochar will save the world. It may not be the end all be all, but it will be part of the solution to improve our lives through enhanced soil health, improved livestock and poultry production, improved stormwater management and water filtration; with emerging uses in building products, asphalt, concrete and steel production, and the oil and natural gas industry.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change lists biochar as one of only a few shovel-ready and scalable ways to quickly and efficiently sequester carbon. The science and art of good forest management has been developing in the US for over 100 years. No matter what your environmental and political view for timber harvesting or climate change, we can aways do better.

Science proves that forest management efficiently captures and sequesters carbon in timely forest management harvest cycles; by regenerating young forests that aggressively capture carbon,

letting those forests mature and sequester carbon, harvesting them at their economic and carbon sequester peak while controlling invasive species, and starting again with new young forest. Good and timely forest management also reduces forest fire fuel. Both of these benefits to society also drive economic development through the production of forest products that touch our lives every day, particularly in rural areas.

Many thousands and maybe tens of thousands of acres of poor forest sites in the US need to be managed to improve forest health and productivity, but there are not enough markets to support that forest management. That means there is A LOT of fiber in US forests that could be converted to many valuable products like biochar.

The Metzler biochar adventure has been a VERY expensive lab experiment that is producing a useful product, excess process heat to displace 350,000 gallons of propane per year in our firewood drying kilns, and a path to enter the carbon credit market early next year through collaboration with a major national carbon project developer and a yet to be determined biochar carbon credit registry. We've also been a strong supporter of the USDA funded MASBio project to investigate new markets for our biochar products.

It is clear that biochar is part of the solution to many global problems when produced by the train load, but we have to first start with truckloads. The BIOCHAR Act will be a spring board for scaling biochar carbon projects that will lead to the normalization of the production and use of biochar.

Thank you for the invitation to speak and hearing my thoughts!