

PRESS RELEASE:

CONECUH COUNTY, ALABAMA ISSUED BDO ZONE ‘A’ RATING FOR WOODY BIOMASS

– ‘A’ rating to accelerate growth of untapped woody biomass markets –

May 16, 2024



The BDO Zone Initiative has issued a BDO Zone ‘A’ rating for Conecuh County, Alabama for 969,000 bone dry tons per year of woody biomass.

The [Conecuh County Commission](#) and [Ecostrat](#) are pleased to announce the issue of an investment grade BDO Zone ‘A’ Rating for Woody Biomass. The Conecuh County BDO Zone is the first ‘A’ rating in the State of Alabama and extends a 75-mile drive distance from the center point in Evergreen, AL.

BDO Zone Ratings have been recognized in the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) [“Plan to Enable the Bioeconomy in America: Building a Resilient Biomass Supply”](#) as a pivotal tool to expedite the development of biobased industry across the nation. The Conecuh County BDO Zone Rating was supported through funding from the USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG).

Conecuh County’s BDO Zone ‘A’ rating denotes high prospective viability of feedstock supply chain and infrastructure, and low expectations of default risk in the Zone. The region features a well-established history of forestry operations, supported by a mature supply chain and robust rail and highway infrastructure for easy access to timberlands and ports. Additionally, the availability of industrial sites suitable for large-scale operations and a pro-business community create an ideal environment for biobased plant expansions.

“This rating signifies that Conecuh County is prepared for bio-manufacturing opportunities that attract significant investment and create good jobs,” said **Brenda Tuck, Rural Development Manager for the [Alabama Department of Commerce](#)**. “Conecuh County’s profile in the bio-energy sector just received a major boost, and this will lead to major developments down the road.”

“Conecuh County has a tremendous resource base and attractive attributes, it was no surprise to see the Evergreen/Conecuh County community awarded an ‘A’ rating for its potential to support further

development within the fast-emerging biomass economy”, added **Dan Chappell, Assistant Division Director with the [Alabama Forestry Commission](#)**.

“The 'A' rating for Conecuh highlights our community's significant potential to become major contributors in the wood industry,” stated **Jessica Dent, Director of Economic Development for the [City of Evergreen](#) and [Conecuh County](#)**. “Historically, our community has been underrepresented in this sector, and we are actively seeking partnerships with biobased companies to leverage our untapped woody biomass resources.”

“The sustainable forest industry provides good-paying jobs to over 54,000 Alabamians. Forestry and wood products manufacturing is the economic engine for much of rural Alabama and counties like Conecuh County are well-positioned for these operations. ForestryWorks® is proud to support Conecuh County in connecting its residents to rewarding careers as the forest industry continues to grow”, commented **Chris Isaacson, President, [Forest Workforce Training Institute \(ForestryWorks®\)](#)**.

Jordan Solomon, Chairman of the BDO Zone Initiative added, “With nearly one million bone dry tonnes of woody biomass, Conecuh County is ideally positioned to support biobased companies seeking top locations for large-scale biomass projects. As the first in the province to receive an 'A' rating, Conecuh is set to lead the way in creating new, sustainable, low-carbon markets across the state.”

To see the full BDO Zone Rating for Conecuh County, Alabama please click [here](#), or visit www.bdozone.org.

BDO Zone project development support:

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About *The BDO Zone Initiative*

The BDO Zone Initiative certifies regional readiness for bio-based manufacturing, creates global connections with project developers, and ignites an influx of clean energy opportunities.

A BDO Zone rating is an internationally recognized standards-based technical risk assessment of biomass feedstock, supply chain, and infrastructure risk with respect to the development potential of new biofuel, renewable chemical, biogas, and bioproduct plants. Investment grade ratings attract new bio-based manufacturing plants to the areas where they are most likely to succeed-- and create jobs.

For more information on the BDO Zone Initiative, contact info@bdozone.org. To view all BDO Zone ratings, visit www.bdozone.org. Check out the BDO Zone [LinkedIn](#) page for news and updates.

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