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**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AWARDS BANGOR FIRM \$750K FOR FOREST
BIOPROCESSING DISCOVERY**

New Environmentally-Friendly Wood Pre-treatment Enzymes Could Revolutionize Wood Processing

Tethys Research LLC, a young Bangor-based biotechnology company, has been awarded **\$749,728** from the Department of Energy (DOE) under its Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase II program to further develop its new enzyme-based pre-treatment for wood processing. Tethys is the only Maine company to receive a DOE SBIR Phase II grant during the 2008 fiscal year.

Tethys Research LLC discovered and is developing novel enzymes to separate wood components during lignocellulosic processing. The current state-of-the-art uses harsh bleaching chemicals and hemicellulases (known enzymes) less effectively. If successfully commercialized, the Tethys technology would (i) enable more environmentally-friendly wood processing, with higher yield per tree, and (ii) allow current pulping waste streams to be utilized efficiently by forest biorefineries for the production of chemicals and biofuels.

Tethys Research has been supported, in part, by the Maine Technology Institute (MTI) through their Seed Grant and Development Award programs. Tethys has also received outreach awards from the Forest BioProducts Research Initiative (FBRI) at the University of Maine, funded by the National Science Foundation EPSCoR program.

"The SBIR process is highly competitive and the Department of Energy award is an important validation of the commercial potential of our technology", said Dr. Nancy Kravit, Chief Executive Scientist of Tethys Research LLC. "MTI's early financial support for this project was absolutely critical. Tethys's success in attracting DOE research funding demonstrates the significance of MTI in helping young companies at early stages of development."

Tethys believes full commercialization of this new technology is still 3 years away. However when launched, the new pre-treatment step will represent a paradigm shift for wood processing and the production of chemicals and biofuels from wood components.

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If you would like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with Dr. Kravit, please contact her at 207-942-9044 or email: ngkravit@tethysresearch.com