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Microsoft selects Freres Lumber, ACT biochar CO2 removal project for Carbon Removal Program

March 11, 2022

By ACT

ACT, the leading provider of custom market-based solutions for reducing carbon footprints, and Freres Lumber Co., a premier engineered wood products manufacturing company, today announced that Microsoft selected their Biochar CO2 Removal Project for its 2022 Carbon Removal Program.

Founded in 2009, ACT helps companies and organizations around the world reduce their carbon footprint by backing high-impact climate projects that generate renewable certificates and carbon credits. Microsoft has agreed to purchase the carbon removal

credits generated by the project, and Freres has committed to investing part of the sales proceeds to research and development around biochar production – among other sustainability initiatives.

“As part of the path to our carbon negative goal by 2030, we are glad to purchase biochar-based carbon removal credits via ACT, from the Pacific Northwest-based supplier Freres,” said Elizabeth Willmott, carbon program director at Microsoft.

This purchase highlights the value of biochar as a powerful and compelling new carbon removal strategy. In addition to its commitment to be carbon negative by 2030, Microsoft has also pledged to remove its historical carbon emissions by 2050 and committed \$1 billion toward a Climate Innovation Fund.

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“Right now, biochar is an underutilized material that is not fully appreciated in the industry with tremendous potential for carbon mitigation,” said Juan Camilo Escobar, manager of renewables and carbon Americas at ACT. “With Microsoft’s investment, our joint project with Freres will lead to new innovations in biochar production and utilization across many industries. We’re thrilled to take climate action with one of the largest and most innovative companies in the world.”

Biochar is a charcoal-like material created by burning carbon-rich biomass in a low-oxygen environment. Biochar is produced from materials such as wood waste, sawdust, agricultural waste, and forestry residues. It is often disposed of into landfills, but if utilized correctly, the carbon-rich organic material has various applications in a number of areas including: raising soil PH, increasing water filtration and retainment rates, promotion of healthy fungal and microbial populations, and helping mitigate forest fires.

“Biochar production, in conjunction with forestry product systems, provides the opportunity to treat underused biomass in an economic and environmentally beneficial way,” said Kyle Freres, vice-president of operations for Freres Lumber. “We intend to continue developing carbon reducing byproducts from wood products to help companies like Microsoft achieve their sustainability goals.”

To date, ACT has helped facilitate 145 million metric tons of CO2 reductions across more than 40 countries.