



From the Editor

Rachel Smolker, Managing Editor

The East Coast has just been slammed by hurricane Irene, while Texas and other southern states are turning to dust under siege of drought. Just some of the nagging reminders that global warming is rapidly gaining momentum.

The halls of Congress may be inhabited by climate deniers, but local organizing remains red hot and the biomass battles going on across the country are a great example. The legal challenges alone—including the recently filed appeal against *Nippon Paper's* biomass power proposal in Port Angeles, Washington—are putting the brakes on biomass and mobilizing resistance.

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Managing Editor - Rachel Smolker

Managing Editor - Meg Sheehan

Editor & Journalist - Josh Schlossberg

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State Lines

Groups Appeal Air Permit for Port Angeles, WA Biomass Power

July 21, 2011 *No Biomass Burn* and six other environmental groups are appealing the air permit decision by the *Olympic Region Clean Air Agency (ORCAA)*, charging that the agency colluded with *Nippon Paper* to grossly understate toxic pollution from a 20-megawatt biomass power proposal under construction in Port Angeles, Washington.



Biomass power resistance in Washington State
(Photo: Shawna Whelan, www.sheltonprogressive.blogspot.com)

Carcinogenic formaldehyde from *Nippon's* project would be emitted at rates nearly ninety times greater than *ORCAA's* permit shows, according to analysis conducted by a nationally renowned air quality engineer hired by the appellants.

Benzene, also a carcinogen, would be emitted at levels six times greater than reported levels, while VOC's (volatile organic compounds) would be emitted in "substantially higher amounts" than the permit shows, according to Badgley.

If allowed to stand, the lower pollution estimates would let *Nippon* avoid more rigorous government regulations and more expensive and effective pollution controls.

Source Watch

North Carolina Court: Burning Whole Trees for Biomass “Renewable”

(source: *Bioenergy News*, Aug. 4, 2011)

Whole trees, including trees from old-growth forests, are “renewable” energy, according to a ruling from the *North Carolina Court of Appeals*.

The ruling denied an appeal by the *Environmental Defense Fund* and *Southern Environmental Law Center* of a *North Carolina Utilities Commission* decision to allow *Duke Energy* to receive “renewable energy credits” when burning whole trees for electricity.

“Any resource that can be considered a biomass [sic] because it is organic and renewable is a biomass resource within the plain meaning of the statute,” ruled Judge Steelman. “All wood fuel meets these criteria and thus is a ‘biomass resource’ and a ‘renewable energy resource.’”

BIOMASS BUSTER of the Month *Duff Badgley - Washington*



Based in Seattle, Duff has helped lead the charge against seven biomass power facilities proposed for his beloved, forested state of Washington.

Duff was a key organizer for the defeat of a 65-megawatt proposal for Shelton, and is currently embroiled in three separate appeals against biomass power proposals for Port Townshend, Longview, and Port Angeles, among other efforts.

“Our victories are many. Savor them. They are sweet and can give us the strength to fight on,” says Badgley. “I am buoyed by my comrades around the country fighting in the trenches with me against biomass power.”

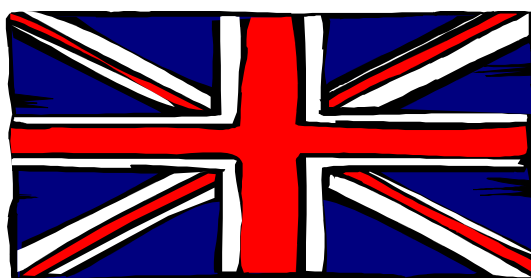


Clearcut outside of Green Swamp, N. Carolina
(Photo: Abigail Singer)

Biomass Energy Colonialism?

A recent industry report says that imports of wood pellets into Europe rose 40% between 2009 and 2010. August saw the formation of a partnership between *Enviva* and *Biomass Energy* to supply more than 350,000 tons of pellets and chips over the next three years from a new facility in Virginia—their second in the state.

Enviva also has facilities in Mississippi and North Carolina. To facilitate exports, the company has purchased a deepwater port and is constructing a storage silo in Virginia. *Enviva* also leases port space in Alabama.



Others are jumping on the pellet bandwagon. *RWE Innogy* has constructed a massive pellet facility, capable of producing 750k tons per year in Georgia, to provide pellets for their Tilbury power station in UK, which plans to convert from burning coal to forest pellets. Growing resistance to import-dependent facilities and policies is evident, but much more is needed to stem the flow of pelletized forests to European burners. ❖

Our Health

Pediatrician Worried About Biomass

Below are excerpts from a letter written by Norma Kreilein, MD, Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, in Jasper, Indiana in response to "Toxic Power: How Power Plants Contaminate Our Air and States," a recent report by Physicians for Social Responsibility and NRDC.

I am writing as a concerned pediatrician in Southern Indiana. We live in the heart of the power plant belt of the Midwest. For many years I have suspected that our local pollution is greatly responsible for our high rate of inflammatory processes, malignancies, and increasing rates of autism.

For the past several months I have been trying to fight the addition of a biomass plant to our city. The city has long been an industrial base with many wood factories, so there has apparently been a high VOC [volatile organic compounds] load.

Strong opposition was voiced from the time it was publicly mentioned, but the city has pushed the plant through anyway. Much manipulation of emission data has occurred (averaging emissions out over the whole county to make them appear insignificant) but, ironically, one of the more interesting arguments is that the plant, though polluting and within 1/2 mile of a residential neighborhood, should nonetheless be built because the plant will decrease our dependence on coal fired plants.

Biomass combustion is being sold to communities around the country by high pressure, ambiguous, unscrupulous carpetbaggers who promise "jobs" and "green energy" but are vacuuming precious federal funds to produce expensive energy that will never solve our dependence on foreign oil nor make our air any cleaner.

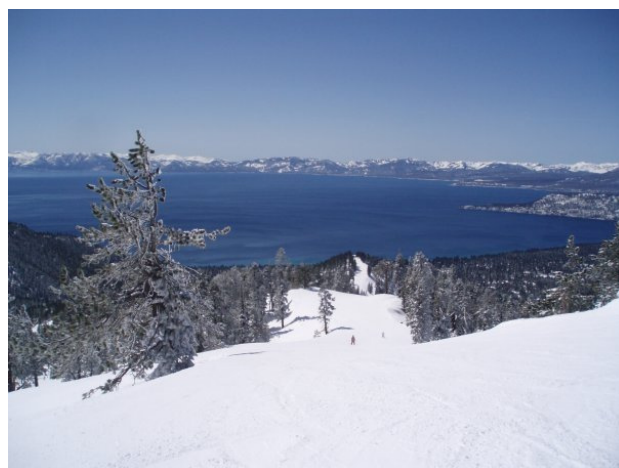
The ultimate problem is that the same monitors and regulators that fail to close down coal plants will do no better with biomass. We will just spend more and think we feel better about it. ❖

State Lines (continued)

Lake Tahoe, California Biomass Power Proposal Relocated

August 4, 2011 The *Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)* rejected siting a 3-megawatt biomass power proposal on Lake Tahoe's north shore in favor of a site a half mile off the western shore, following opposition by local citizen groups.

"The grassroots effort was just one piece of the puzzle," said Dawn Baffone of *The Lake Tahoe Anti-Biomass Plant Coalition*, "but was a big factor in keeping the plant out of this residential area in Kings Beach."



Lake Tahoe, California

(Photo: Dawn Baffone)

An environmental analysis revealed a "noise impact that cannot be mitigated," at the original Kings Beach site, according to an August 9, 2011 letter from *TRPA* board chair, Norma Santiago.

The new Cabin Creek site, which houses existing industrial operations, including a recycling facility, is within the Mountain Counties Air Basin, which is in non-attainment for federal clean air standards.

Friends of Lake Tahoe argues in a June 13, 2011 letter that the air quality issue could be resolved by reclassifying Cabin Creek as within the *Eastern County Nevada Air Basin*, which is currently in attainment.

State Lines (cont.)

Biomass Power Developers Push Back in Springfield, Massachusetts

(source: Buffy Spencer, *The Republican*, June 29, 2011)

The developers of a proposed 35-megawatt biomass power incinerator for Springfield, Mass. have filed a lawsuit claiming the Springfield City Council acted with “either bad faith or at least gross negligence” when it voted 10-2 to revoke a special permit for building the facility in May.

Palmer Renewable Energy is asking the Land Court in Boston to annul the City Council permit revocation, to award “costs,” and to “grant such further relief as this court deems just and proper.”

The City Council “carefully considered the issues and made sure they had the legal basis for revoking the permit,” said Springfield resident Steve Dzubak. “I have confidence in them, and I have every confidence that they will prevail in court as having exercised their rights and responsibilities.”

Shortly after the City Council decision, on July 1, the *Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection* issued an Air Quality Permit for the proposed Springfield facility. ❖

Eye on D.C.

U.S. Liquid Biofuel Expansion

President Obama announced that the *Department of Energy (DOE)*, *Department of Agriculture*, and the *Navy* will invest up to \$510 million to develop marine and aviation biofuels for commercial and military transportation. This announcement came on the heels of \$12 million granted for bioenergy crop research.

DOE claims that “scientists in the US have already paved the way for biofuels to supplement and *eventually even replace oil* in the coming decades.”

Alternatives

Flywheels for Energy Storage

By Scott Stafford, *Berkshire Eagle*, July 11, 2011



(Photo: Beacon Power)

The technology contained in a new, first-of-its-kind 20-megawatt flywheel energy storage facility in Stephentown, New York, has the potential to make renewable sources of power such as wind and solar even more viable in the coming decades.

Located on seven acres within a couple of miles of the Massachusetts state line, the 3.5 acre storage facility consumes no fuel and creates no emissions by using flywheels housed in nearly frictionless containers.

Using kinetic energy, the flywheels absorb or inject electricity to relieve the grid of excess electricity or to pump up power in the grid during high-usage times. ❖

The *U.S. Energy Information Administration* projects that ethanol could, optimistically, account for 7.6 percent of the total gasoline pool by 2030.

In an editorial, Robert Bryce points out that in 2011, the US will use about 40 percent of its corn crop to produce the energy equivalent of 0.6 percent of global oil demands.

TAKE ACTION!

Become a distributor for The Biomass Monitor. Get a copy to your friends, family, and co-workers and help spread the word about the threats to public health, climate, and forests from biomass power and the communities banding together to keep biomass power incinerators out of their towns!