



From the Editor

- by Meg Sheehan, Managing Editor

As the first Occupy protests got underway in September, Massachusetts anti-biomass activists descended on the State House in Boston demanding that Gov. Patrick reject industry subsidies for burning trees while calling it “clean energy.” While we wait for the regulations to be issued, it’s clear that a new day has dawned and it won’t be business as usual for corporate “persons” and their political cronies.

Read about citizen victories and follow us on Twitter (@BiomassMonitor) and on Facebook as we connect, communicate, and celebrate the fight against destructive energy policies that rip off American taxpayers.

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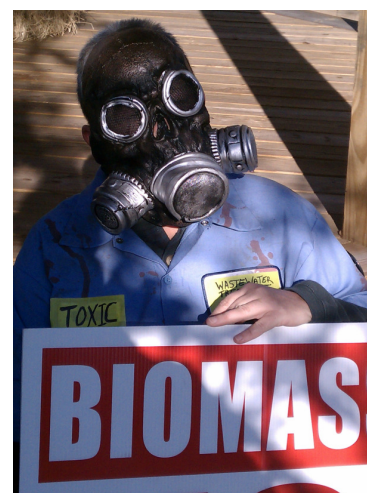
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State Lines

Massachusetts Poised to Slash Biomass Power Subsidies

- by Meg Sheehan

In the coming weeks, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) is scheduled to issue Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) regulations that will require energy producers seeking “renewable energy credits” to meet strict standards: (1) approximately 40% efficiency (biomass power is about 25% efficient and still gets “green” energy credits) (2) proof that their greenhouse gas emissions are lower than fossil fuel combustion (3) and compliance with forest harvesting limits.



(Photo: Melinda Reynolds)

The Fall 2010 DOER RPS proposed regulations for biomass energy were met with a fierce backlash from over fourteen state and national public health and environmental groups. These groups are demanding that the state follow the science it commissioned in the “Manomet” Study, saying that the weakened proposed regulations were the result of demands of biomass industry lobbyists.

Source Watch

Study: Logging Forests for Bioenergy Worsens Climate Change

- by Josh Schlossberg

Oct. 24, 2011: A study from *Oregon State University (OSU)* demonstrates that logging forests for bioenergy would increase carbon dioxide emissions by 14 to 17%.

“Regional Carbon Dioxide Implications of Forest Bioenergy Production,” by lead author Tara Hudiburg, is yet another peer reviewed study debunking the carbon neutrality myth of bioenergy, still being perpetuated by the biomass industry and government agencies.

“If our ultimate goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, producing bioenergy from forests will be counterproductive,” said study co-author and OSU professor Beverly Law.

BIOMASS BUSTER of the Month Cara Beth Jones - Indiana



“I first thought this was a fight about saving our precious clean drinking water, but it became so much more,” says **Cara Beth Jones**, co-chair of **Concerned Citizens of Crawford County**, a major push behind the successful campaign to stop *Liberty Green Renewables* from building two biomass power proposals in Indiana.

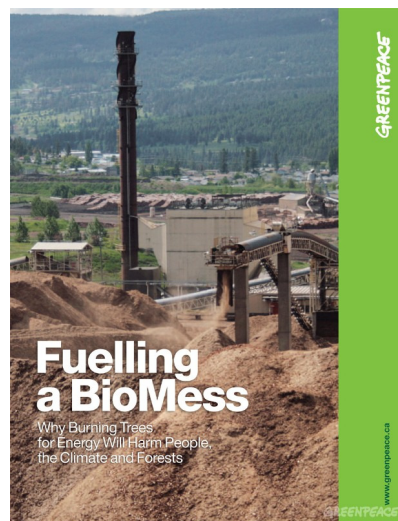
Growing up on a sixth generation family farm in rural Indiana, Cara Beth isn’t sure how she got labeled an “activist,” thinking herself more of a “protector.” “But I’ll wear the title proudly,” she adds.

“Clean air, our property and land and now the crops and food,” says Cara Beth, “are these not things worth protecting?”

Greenpeace Trashes Biomass

- by Josh Schlossberg

Nov. 2, 2011: *Greenpeace Canada* released a report condemning burning Canada’s forests for biomass electricity and biofuels. The report, “Fueling a Biomess: Why Burning Trees for Energy Will Harm People, the Climate, and Forests,” demonstrates how forest bioenergy is a step in the wrong direction for sound economic and environmental energy policy and “cannot and should not replace fossil fuels on a large-scale.”



The report debunks the “the illusion of carbon-neutrality,” cites air pollution concerns, and concludes that “electricity production from forest biomass is inefficient, while transforming trees into biofuels for transportation will mean impacting vast areas of forests.”

Greenpeace calls for the Canadian government to “suspend the approval of new bioenergy proposals and conduct a review of existing projects, their wood allocations, and their impacts on communities, climate and forests.”

Other *Greenpeace* demands include banning the logging and burning of whole trees for biomass energy: “whether commercial, non-commercial, burned or diseased, standing trees should not be used for energy.”

Read or download the full report at: <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/bioMESS>.

Our Health

American Academy of Family Physicians Opposes Biomass Burning



Below are excerpts from an April 23, 2010 letter from Douglas Henley, M.D., vice president and CEO of the American Academy of Family Physicians (representing over 94,700 family physicians and medical students) to the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources regarding biomass proposals.

We believe that the proposed biomass burning facilities pose a serious risk to the health of patients. The burning of poultry litter and wood wastes leads to increased risk of premature death and serious chronic illnesses.

The plants additionally will have a negative impact on the health of our patients through emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxides, arsenic, mercury and dioxins, all of which link directly to respiratory, brain, kidney, heart and thyroid diseases; cancer; diabetes mellitus; neurotoxicity; developmental delays in children and disruption in fetal development.



These emissions will have an adverse affect on the health of the most vulnerable North Carolinians: developing fetuses, newborns, children, those with chronic illness and the elderly.

The result of bringing these biomass facilities online will be increased disability and disease, which will lead to increased medical costs. 🔍

State Lines (continued)

City Defends Biomass Moratorium in Vancouver, WA

- by Josh Schlossberg

(source: Stephanie Rice, *The Columbian*, Oct. 31, 2011)

Schneider Electric, a biomass power developer based in France, filed a lawsuit against the City of Vancouver, WA following an Oct. 11 City Council decision to enact a six-month moratorium on downtown development.

“The lawsuit is at best premature because the city council is required by law to hold a public hearing on the moratorium which has not yet happened,” said Vancouver City attorney Ted Gathe. “We intend to vigorously defend the city against these claims.”



Vancouver residents protesting biomass power
(Photo: Gerald Bartlett, *The Columbian*, Nov. 2, 2011)

In a memo to *Schneider Electric*, Clark County Administrator Bill Baron wrote, “because of the uncertainty surrounding these issues and the multiplicity of legal options that currently exist, Clark County would like to suggest a ‘pause’ in development activity.”

Members of the public have complained to the City and County regarding the health impacts from air pollution to be emitted from the proposed incinerator. The public hearing on the moratorium is scheduled for Dec. 5.

State Lines (continued)

Two Biomass Proposals Axed in Indiana

- by Josh Schlossberg

(source: Grace Schneider, *The Courier-Journal*, Oct. 12, 2011)

Liberty Green Renewables has withdrawn its two 32-megawatt biomass power incinerator proposals for Milltown and Scottsburg, Indiana. The corporation asked the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to revoke air emission permits previously issued by the state.



(Photo: JH Lacey, journalism.indiana.edu)

“What the citizens did was remarkable because the little guy was up against big energy and big banks,” said Cara Beth Jones of *Concerned Citizens of Crawford County*, part of the local grassroots biomass opposition. Citizen resistance included filling public meetings, educating elected officials, airing television ads, and filing legal appeals. 🔍

Eye on D.C.

Super Committee: Cut Biomass Subsidies

On November 16, a letter signed by representatives of 46 organizations in 22 states was hand-delivered to members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, or Super Committee, urging them to remove over a billion dollars of annual federal spending to private corporations and developers burning “biomass” for electricity and constructing biomass power facilities.

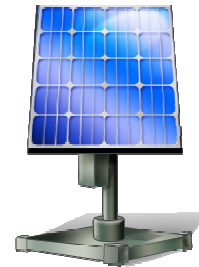
The letter cites \$1,117,000,000 in federal subsidies diverted to the biomass power industry in 2010 alone and over \$102,000,000 of ARRA stimulus

Beyond Burning

Solar Cheaper Than Fossil Fuels by 2026

- by Christopher Mims, Grist

<http://www.grist.org/list/2011-11-03-solar-cheaper-than-fossil-fuels-in-a-decade-says-steven-chu>



Nov. 3, 2011: Solar power will be cheaper than fossil fuels at some point between the end of this decade and 2026, said U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu at the Washington Post's Smart Energy conference this morning.

The date at which solar power reaches "grid parity" with fossil fuels without subsidy has been the subject of heated debate for decades.

Needless to say, solar at the same price as fossil fuels has the potential to completely transform the global energy market by making the switch to solar a no-brainer. You might even call it the Holy Grail of renewable energy technologies. 🔍

funding spent on the construction of 9 biomass power facilities, as of May 2011.

The letter refers to cutting biomass power subsidies as the “low hanging fruit” for the Super Committee, questioning the justice of precious taxpayer dollars being taken from the wallets of struggling Americans to line the pockets of corporate profiteers developing a costly, polluting, and controversial energy source, poorly disguised as “clean” energy.

TAKE ACTION!

Sign the petition asking Congress to cut wasteful biomass power subsidies at:

www.change.org/petitions/sen-patty-murray-cut-billions-in-wasteful-biomass-power-subsidies