



From the Editor

Rachel Smolker, Managing Editor

The recent announcement of a Congressional “biomass caucus” reveals just how out of touch Washington is with the real world. Rep. Peter Welch, of Vermont, who is chairing the caucus, is no fool, but clearly he has never looked a real biomass permit application in the face. The permitting game involves evading public participation, muddling numbers to avoid thresholds for regulation, and ensuring that subsidies are forthcoming. Washington State’s Longview facility is a good recent example, as is the Domtar facility in Wisconsin. Aging pulp mills seeking a new lease on life—these polluters need to be held accountable, not granted subsidy handouts for spewing toxins into the air!

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 State Lines
- 2 Source Watch/Buster of the Month
- 3 Our Health/State Lines (cont.)
- 4 State Lines (cont.)
- 4 D.C. Watch/Take Action!
- 4 Alternatives

State Lines

Longview, Washington Biomass Power Pollution Permit Appealed

July 5, 2011 *No Biomass Burn, World Temperate Rainforest Network, and the Olympic Environmental Council* filed a legal appeal against a 54-megawatt biomass power incinerator proposed for the City of Longview by *Longview Fibre*. The *Washington Department of Ecology* issued an air permit to *Fibre* on June 2, 2011.



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

“Fibre is trying to poison the people of the Longview region and the state for bigger profits,” said Duff Badgley, president of *No Biomass Burn*.

“We estimate Fibre would generate about \$500 million in revenue over 20 years from sale of this electricity,” Badgley said. “Fibre’s Canadian owners get the big money. The people of the Longview region and the state get the big pollution. And this pollution can kill.”

Continued on page 3

Source Watch

Biomass Industry vs. Biomass Industry in New Hampshire

Employees from the biomass industry in New Hampshire strongly opposed the construction of a recently canceled 75-megawatt biomass power proposal by *Laidlaw Berlin BioPower for Berlin*, New Hampshire. Below are excerpts from public comments submitted by dozens of biomass workers to the *NH Public Utilities Commission*.

“I am currently employed at a small biomass power plant in central NH. The Power Purchase Agreement...will have a detrimental effect on me, my coworkers, the local economy, and the local loggers in the community.

“I see no benefit to a plant this size being built in the state. I fear it could put me out of work and once unemployed have an increase in my electric bill that I may or may not be able to pay.”

BIOMASS BUSTER of the Month *Denny Haldeman - Tennessee*



Living in the mixed mesophytic forest north of Chattanooga, Denny Haldeman has been “warning about the impending rush to burn forests” since the 1980’s. As co-founder of *Dogwood Alliance* and *TAGER*, Denny helped fight off 27 biomass chipping facilities in the Tennessee Valley throughout the 90’s. Denny is currently active on the national steering committee for *Energy Justice Network’s* anti-biomass campaign.

“We had the most amazing and diverse coalition for forest protection ever seen in the US when we fought off the last round of chippers,” says Denny. “I see our movement as quite capable of replicating that effort now.”



White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire
(Photo: Chris Matera, Massachusetts Forest Watch, www.maforests.org)

\$5 Million of Taxpayer Dollars to Fund Biomass on Public Lands

An appropriations bill for the *Department of the Interior* in the *U.S. House of Representatives* would divert \$5 million of taxpayer dollars to the *U.S. Forest Service* to make grants “for the purpose of creating incentives for increased use of biomass from national forest lands.”

Western public forests, including National Forests and Bureau of Land Management lands, are being increasingly targeted for biomass extraction under the guise of “fire fuels reduction,” contrary to the best available science.

The *Healthy Forest Restoration Act* (HFRA), passed by President Bush in 2002, increased logging on public lands in the name of protection from wildfire. *HFRA* also sought to “authorize grant programs to improve the commercial value of forest biomass.”

According to Jack Cohen, research scientist at the *Fire Sciences Laboratory* in the *U.S. Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station*: “Home ignitability, rather than wildland fuels, is the principal cause of home losses during wildland/urban interface fires. Key items are flammable roofing materials and the presence of burnable vegetation immediately adjacent to homes. Intense flame fronts (or crown fires) will not ignite wooden walls at distances greater than 40 meters or 130 feet.” ❖

Our Health

American Lung Association “Strongly Opposes” Biomass Energy

Below are excerpts from the *American Lung Association’s* “Public Policy Position on Energy,” released on June 11, 2011.

“The American Lung Association does not support biomass combustion for electricity production, a category that includes wood, wood products, agricultural residues or forest wastes, and potentially highly toxic feedstocks, such as construction and demolition waste. If biomass is combusted, state-of-the-art pollution controls must be required.



“The American Lung Association calls for effective enforcement of existing laws and regulations governing the combustion of wood and other biomass sources, as well as the expanded regulation of air pollution emissions from these sources.

“The American Lung Association strongly opposes the combustion of wood and other biomass sources at schools and institutions with vulnerable populations.

“The American Lung Association recommends continuing research on the health effects of burning wood and other biomass sources, and the technologies to reduce the emissions associated with the combustion of these fuels.

“The combustion of fossil fuels and biomass... generates a significant share of the nation’s air pollution, threatening the health and lives of millions of people, including those who are most vulnerable to harm. The American Lung Association strongly supports policies that encourage a transition from coal, oil, and biomass use...to cleaner alternatives.” ❖

State Lines (continued)

Biomass Opponents in Rothschild, Wisconsin Challenge Developer

June 21, 2011 *Save Our Air Resources* (SOAR) and *Biomass Accountability Project* challenged an announcement by the developer of a proposed 50-megawatt biomass power incinerator for Rothschild, who called the project “green power.”

Saying the incinerator will be a “major polluter,” and claiming *Domtar Corporation* misrepresents the project as being environmentally friendly, *SOAR* and two residents filed a lawsuit challenging the state air pollution permit.



(Photo: www.shropshirestar.com)

Domtar’s “claim is contradicted by facts in the company’s own documents showing the project will spew out hundreds of tons of toxic air pollutants, discharge waste to the Wisconsin River, and burn toxic sludge and trees,” said *Biomass Accountability Project* spokesperson Meg Sheehan.

“Toxic air pollution from the incinerator will poison the 2,600 children that live and go to school directly downwind from the biomass plant,” said *SOAR* spokesperson Paul Schwantes. “We are not fooled by claims that this is a “green” project.”

“The project will emit dioxin, deadly particulates, and other pollution that contributes to asthma, heart disease and more,” according to pediatrician Dr. William Sammons. ❖

State Lines (cont.)

Report Exposes Biomass Power Taxpayer Subsidies

June 28, 2011 A report released by the Massachusetts-based *Biomass Accountability Project* details how taxpayers and rate-payers are subsidizing hundreds of biomass combustion power facilities through programs intended for clean, renewable energy. The report, "Biomass Electricity: Clean Energy Subsidies for a Dirty Industry," analyzes federal and state subsidies for electricity generated by burning biomass.

The report explains why funding biomass burning as so-called "renewable energy" is highly controversial and describes opposition from health, environmental, and fiscal watchdog groups, and local communities. The report lists over twenty facilities cancelled in the last eighteen months due, in part, to public opposition.



The full report is at: www.nobiomassburning.org.

D.C. Watch

Congress Cuts Ethanol Subsidies

Spending cuts are all the rage in Congress. Wasteful subsidies going to biofuels were targeted in July by an amendment to legislation in the Senate that would repeal the 45 cent per gallon ethanol tax credit and eliminate the tariff on imported ethanol.

The bill was hailed by many feeling the pinch from tightening corn supplies, including groups fighting hunger, grocers, and meat producers. But it also raised concerns about opening the floodgates to imports, with all the harms from deforestation to violent land grabs associated with ethanol

Alternatives

Solar Power at Night?

www.setyoufreenews.com



Solar powered utilities normally have a great drawback at night: they cannot generate power. But Gemasolar can continue running the turbines and generating electricity for up to 15 hours of darkness by drawing off the stored heat and steam generated within the salt tanks.

Using a gigantic array of solar mirrors, the Gemasolar Power Plant located near Seville, Spain reflects sunlight off its 2,650 panels onto a huge receiver located at the epicenter of the plant.

The highly polished mirrors reflect as much as 95 percent of the solar radiation directed towards tanks containing molten salt. As the salt heats, pressurized steam is created [which] drives the power station's turbines. ❖

production in Brazil and elsewhere.

The amendment is not likely to pass into law right off, but won overwhelming bipartisan support and sent a strong signal to the ethanol industry of what's to come. While we're at it, why not cut wasteful subsidies for biomass burning as well?

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!