

Public Comment

August 25, 2022

Regular Board of Directors Meeting

From: [Redwood Coast Energy Authority](#)
To: [Richard Engel](#)
Cc: [Jocelyn Gwynn](#); [Lori Taketa](#)
Subject: FW: End biomass combustion
Date: Friday, July 29, 2022 8:22:39 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: B Dass [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 28, 2022 7:35 PM
To: Redwood Coast Energy Authority <info@redwoodenergy.org>
Subject: End biomass combustion

Dear RCEA

I call on RCEA to move forward on its commitment in the RePower Plan to end biomass combustion. Biomass is neither clean, nor carbon free. Biomass plants are federally designated major sources of air pollution no cleaner than coal.

Biomass pollution doesn't just harm people living nearby. Fine particulates can stay in the air for many days and travel hundreds of miles. The science is clear that even low levels of exposure cause heart attacks, lung disease, hospitalizations, and premature death. Requiring each community with a power plant to have its own study proving harm, aka the "show me the bodies", before taking action is a shameful delaying tactic that runs counter to the basic tenets of epidemiology and public health.

Humboldt Redwoods' biomass plant burns mill waste, not slash, so it doesn't prevent forest fires. In fact, it increases the risk of fire by emitting tons of greenhouse gas that will not be reabsorbed from the atmosphere fast enough to avoid climate catastrophe. Wildfires and drought are also decreasing air quality in our county. The American Lung Association's State of the Air Report for 2022 gave Humboldt County a C for 24 hour fine particulate pollution and indicated that our annual average fine particulate exposure is increasing and is only a few decimal points away from violating the new air quality standard recommended to the EPA by its expert panel. The American Lung Association counts over 50,000 Humboldt residents who are particularly vulnerable to health harms from fine particulates. The best way to protect these residents is to decrease fine particulate emissions from the sources we can control.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Lung Association, and the American Public Health Association have declared that biomass combustion plants are harmful to human health and should not be supported with public dollars. RCEA's practice of prioritizing local renewable energy, regardless of pollutant and carbon emissions, does not serve our county well. We ask that you place a higher value on protecting the health of current residents and future generations by putting public health and climate first and prioritizing clean carbon-free power over dirty local energy.

With only 8 years remaining until the current biomass contract ends and another timber company talking about building a new biomass plant, RCEA must make it clear now that polluting and carbon emitting power plants do not have a future in its portfolio. We ask the RCEA board to commit to:

1. Not increasing the amount of biomass energy between now and 2030
2. Not renewing contracts for biomass combustion after 2030.
3. Only contracting with new non-combustion biomass plants which have pollution controls that reduce emissions to at least the level of a natural gas fired power plant and capture of at least 90% of carbon emissions.
4. Passing a resolution that reorders your priorities to put public health and climate first, above local, when making energy procurement decisions

Sincerely,

Jorge De Cecco



Ukiah, CA 95482