Public Comment

September 28, 2023
RCEA Board of Directors
Regular Meeting

Lori Taketa

From: Jesse Noell [redacted]
Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 3:06 PM
To: Public Comment; 350 Humboldt
Subject: What RCEA should have done for every school, every parking lot, every house; years ago

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

But, our Supervisors and Legislators are too dumb to listen to the taxpayers who explained the math to them six years ago.

From: Biological Bob
To: Lori Taketa
Subject: Re: Biomass is not a clean energy producer
Date: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 1:45:29 PM

Lori,

For the Board's information, I am a retired USDA District Conservationist, College of the Redwoods Climate Instructor with a master's degree in Forest Management from Humboldt State.

Thank you for your help.

Bob Rohde

On Mon, Sep 18, 2023 at 3:43 PM Lori Taketa [redacted] wrote:

> Hello Mr. Rohde,
>
> Thank you for your email. It will be included as public comment for the September 28, RCEA Board meeting.
>
> Best Regards,
>
> **Lori Taketa**
>
> Executive Support Specialist & Clerk of the Board | Redwood Coast Energy Authority
>
> (707) 269-1700 | [redacted] | www.RedwoodEnergy.org
>
> *Pronouns: she, her, hers*
>
>
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Biological Bob <[redacted]
> **Sent:** Friday, September 15, 2023 10:39 AM

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@redwoodenergy.org>
Subject: Biomass is not a clean energy producer

Dear Board,

California State Senate Bill 350 requires the state of California to meet utility customer resource needs by doubling statewide energy efficiency and ramping up the use of clean energy resources. Currently, the state of California considers the burning of forest industry waste for energy production (biomass), such as the Humboldt Sawmill Company in Scotia, as a clean energy resource. Advocates for biomass energy claim that when forests are harvested sustainably, and the timber industry waste byproducts are burned as fuel, the smokestack emissions are canceled out by the carbon absorbed by forest regrowth. However, the opposite is true.

The larger trees that were cut to produce forest products would have continued to remove more carbon from the atmosphere than the forest regrowth. So, cutting the mature trees down and burning the carbon-rich tree waste generates more carbon in the sky than leaving the trees standing and not generating the waste in the first place.

Earth's forests cannot slow down the increase of carbon in the atmosphere, as shown on the following NASA website: https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/carbon-dioxide/

So, the burning of forest biomass for energy production is a carbon emitter, not a clean energy source, that produces more carbon in the sky every day than can be absorbed by trees regardless of what biomass advocates say. California energy utility ratepayers are being forced by the state to finance the forest industry to pollute the planet with the burning of their renewable waste.

— Bob Rohde, McKinleyvilleBob Rohde, McKinleyville
Published Times Standard Letter to the Editor September 7, 2023

From: Walter Paniak
To: Lori Taketa
Subject: Science article on the health effects of air pollution
Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 10:54:41 PM
Attachments: Untitled 43.pdf

The Humboldt Sawmill Company is the single largest point source of PM 2.5 particles in the county.
This article provides some technical information concerns the
Biological pathways for the morbidity that can follow air pollution
Especially the 2.5PM particles.

Walt Paniak
Arcata resident

Science News

from research organizations

Air pollution can alter the effectiveness of antibiotics and increases the potential of disease, new study reveals

Date: March 2, 2017

Source: University of Leicester

Summary: New research has explored the impact of black carbon on bacteria in the respiratory tract. The study specifically looked into how air pollution affects the bacteria living in our bodies, specifically the respiratory tract -- the nose, throat and lungs.

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FULL STORY

Interdisciplinary research at the University of Leicester has explored the impact of black carbon on bacteria in the respiratory tract

Researchers from the University of Leicester have for the first time discovered that bacteria that cause respiratory infections are directly affected by air pollution -- increasing the potential for infection and changing the effectiveness of antibiotic treatment.

The interdisciplinary study, which has been published in the journal *Environmental Microbiology*, has important implications for the treatment of infectious diseases, which are known to be increased in areas with high levels of air pollution.

The study looked into how air pollution affects the bacteria living in our bodies, specifically the respiratory tract -- the nose, throat and lungs.

A major component of air pollution is black carbon, which is produced through the burning of fossil fuels such as diesel, biofuels, and biomass.

Breaking

this hour

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- Jellyfish Learn to Dodge Obstacles
- Astronomers Discover Newborn Galaxies
- Helping Birds Adjust to Climate Change
- Universe Structure Formed Surprisingly Quickly
- Jupiter's Moon Europa: Carbon Source
- Why Do You Recognize Upright Faces More Easily?

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The research shows that this pollutant changes the way in which bacteria grow and form communities, which could affect how they survive on the lining of our respiratory tracts and how well they are able to hide from, and combat, our immune systems.

Dr Julie Morrissey, Associate Professor in Microbial Genetics in the University of Leicester's Department of Genetics and lead author on the paper, said: "This work increases our understanding of how air pollution affects human health. It shows that the bacteria which cause respiratory infections are affected by air pollution, possibly increasing the risk of infection and the effectiveness of antibiotic treatment of these illnesses.

"Our research could initiate an entirely new understanding of how air pollution affects human health. It will lead to enhancement of research to understand how air pollution leads to severe respiratory problems and perturbs the environmental cycles essential for life."

Dr Shane Hussey and Dr Jo Purves, the research associates working on the project said: "Everybody worldwide is exposed to air pollution every time they breathe. It is something we cannot limit our exposure to as individuals, but we know that it can make us ill. So we need to understand what it is doing to us, how it is making us unhealthy, and how we might be able to stop these effects."

The research focused on two human pathogens, Staphylococcus aureus and Streptococcus pneumoniae, which are both major causes of respiratory diseases and exhibit high levels of resistance to antibiotics.

The research team found that black carbon alters the antibiotic tolerance of Staphylococcus aureus communities and importantly increases the resistance of communities of Streptococcus pneumoniae to penicillin, the front line treatment of bacterial pneumonia.

Furthermore, it was found that black carbon caused Streptococcus pneumoniae to spread from the nose to the lower respiratory tract, which is a key step in development of disease.

Professors Julian Ketley, Professor of Bacterial Genetics, Department of Genetics and Peter Andrew, Professor of Microbial Pathogenesis, Department of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation, said: "Urbanisation in megacities with extreme levels of air pollution are major risk factors for human health in many parts of the world. Our research seeks to lead and participate in international research consortia of biologists, chemists, clinician, social scientists and urban planners. Together we will investigate how increasing urbanisation promotes infectious disease."

The World Health Organization describes air pollution as the "largest single environmental health risk."

Air pollution is thought to be responsible for at least 7 million deaths per year, which equates to an eighth of all global deaths.

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Early Humans

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Researchers Issue Urgent Call to Save the World's Largest Flower -Rafflesia -- From Extinction

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Slow Growth in Crocodile Ancestors Pre-Dated Their Semi-Aquatic Lifestyle

The UK and many other countries around the world continue to breach the recommended pollution limits set by the World Health Organization.

Professor Paul Monks, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Science and Engineering, who is a leading expert on air pollution added: "The lead investigators have brought together their expertise in genetics, microbiology and air pollution chemistry to provide truly multidisciplinary ground breaking insights.

"This research has significant potential to initiate a global research effort to understand a hitherto unknown effect of air pollution and provide significant additional impetus to the control of pollution."

Story Source:

Materials provided by **University of Leicester**. *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

Journal Reference:

1. Shane. J. K. Hussey, Joanne Purves, Natalie Allcock, Vitor E. Fernandes, Paul S. Monks, Julian M. Ketley, Peter W. Andrew, Julie A. Morrissey. **Air pollution alters Staphylococcus aureus and Streptococcus pneumoniae biofilms, antibiotic tolerance and colonisation**. *Environmental Microbiology*, 2017; DOI: 10.1111/1462-2920.13686

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Materials Submitted After Agenda Publication

4.5 Executive Director Salary Range Update

9/28/23

To the Board of Directors of the Redwood Coast Energy Authority

RE: Item #4.5, Executive Director Salary Schedule Update, of the Agenda of the September 28, 2023 business meeting

The report on item 4.5 of today's meeting agenda misstates that the comparable labor market for the Executive Director position was not identified and benchmarked in past biennial salary surveys conducted per the Board-adopted employee compensation policy. In fact, it has, as detailed in "Biennial Salary Survey of Benchmark Classifications at RCEA's Labor Market Agencies, 2023" included as attachment A to Agenda Item # 10.1 in the May 25, 2023, RCEA Board of Directors meeting agenda packet. This 2023 survey concluded that the average comparable midpoint ($223,313) for the Executive Director position was 38% over the (pre 7/1/2023) RCEA midpoint. However, the salary survey notes that the Executive Director individual benchmark classification was excluded when determining the "average" of the salary positions. By excluding the Executive Director role, the "average" of benchmark classifications was determined to be about 12% more than RCEA salaries. The Board approved a 14% percent increase for all positions, including the Executive Director, effective July 1, based on the Social Security Cola and West Region CPI percentage. This Board action increased the Executive Director's midpoint by 14% from $161,356 to $183,946, which became effective July 1, 2023.

The Item 4.5 report also deviates from the approved labor market agencies that were surveyed in the 2023 biannual survey. It includes the 5 highest paid comparable positions to the RCEA Executive Director position from the survey while it neglects to include the lowest two comparable positions. In the omission of those two lowest comparable salaries, the Executive Director midpoint rises from the 2023 survey average of $223,313 to the average presented in the Item 4.5 report, $270,501. See below the Executive Director section of the survey as it was presented to the Board in May 2023.

Executive Director			
Air Pollution Control Officer	North Coast Air Quality Mang District	125,000.00	
General Manager	Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District	167,142.00	
Electric Utility Director	City of Ukiah Electric Utility	188,550.00	
Interim General Manager	Valley Clean Energy	220,500.50	
General Manager	Trinity County Public Utility District	241,144.00	
Executive Director	Pioneer Community Energy	276,659.00	
Chief Executive Officer	Sonoma Clean Power	344,196.84	
AVERAGE		**$ 223,313.19**	**$ 161,356.00**
Current RCEA Midpoint (Executive Director step 5), effective 7/1/21			**38%**

This resulting midpoint in the Item 4.5 report of $270,501 equates to a 47% increase from the $183,946 midpoint approved in May that went into effect on July 1, 2023. Taking the 14% increase that was already approved plus the 47% increase currently being considered, this equates to a 67% increase from the pre 7/1/2023, $161,356 midpoint.

In summary, proposing to "update" the midpoint of any classification range assumes that this process was used in the past to fairly determine individual classification increases, which it was not. It rather has been used as justification for blanket cost of living increases across all classifications. Additionally, if singular classification adjustments are determined to be in line with the spirit of the current Policy, then

consider that the Executive Director role was included in the 2023 survey and the result was significantly less than the increase proposed by Item 4.5.

I ask the board to consider the following alternative actions:

- Adjust the salary range of the Executive Director based on the average midpoint calculated in the comprehensive Biennial Salary Survey of Benchmark Classifications that was conducted and presented to the Board in May 2023 (38% increase from pre-July 1, 2023, salary).
- Update the mid-points for all RCEA job classifications using a similar methodology of utilizing only the highest five benchmarks and making it retroactive to July 1, 2023.
- Eliminate the Executive Director class from the Board-adopted RCEA salary schedule and negotiate all Executive Director compensation via a contract amendment or some other process separate from the process defined in the Board-adopted Employee Compensation Policy.

In addition to my above concerns about the process utilized to determine the recommended action for item 4.5, I don't believe the Board has all the information needed to act on Agenda Item 4.5 today. In past years RCEA's General Counsel has solicited input from RCEA's employees- in more recent years, just directors- when evaluating the Executive Director's performance and considering contract renewals or changes, which I think is invaluable to the health of the organization and to the community. I believe it provides RCEA employees some confidence that not only the Executive Director, but the Board that employs the Executive Director, values those of us that make up this organization and that we have worthwhile input to inform these types of decisions.

Sincerely,

Lori Biondini
Director of Business Planning and Finance, RCEA