



From the Editor

Rachel Smolker, Managing Editor

Some significant victories have been gained against biomass power proposals in Springfield, MA, Valdosta, GA, and Mecklenburg County, North Carolina—pushed back temporarily, if not for good. At the same time, new proposals just keep on coming—one seeking to convert three of *Dominion's* coal burning utilities in Virginia to biomass, under the guise that it is "economical" and "clean."

The recent U.S. Senate vote to end some of the subsidies being poured into ethanol may offer a ray of hope. If policymakers are finally willing to put an end to the ethanol boondoggle, why not cut wasteful biomass subsidies as well?

THE BIOMASS MONITOR is published by the Biomass Accountability Project, Biofuelwatch, Energy Justice Network, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, and Save America's Forests.

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State Lines

Valdosta, Georgia Biomass Power Proposal Expires

(source: Valdosta Daily Times, June 1, 2011)

A proposal for a controversial 40-megawatt biomass power incinerator for Valdosta, Georgia may be canceled after developer *Wiregrass Power* missed a deadline for construction laid out by the *Industrial Authority*, according to an "Economic Development Agreement."

"This was the most diverse group of people that I have ever seen for any citizen's group in Valdosta," said Leigh Touchton, President of the *Valdosta Chapter of NAACP*, which has opposed the facility due to public health and environmental justice concerns.



Valdosta, GA residents say no to biomass power
(photo: Valdosta Daily Times, June 1, 2011)

According to *Wiregrass Activists for Clean Energy* (WACE), one of several anti-biomass citizens' groups in the area, the facility would have burned 640,000 tons of wood and 492 tons of sewage sludge annually, and been located 1.5 miles away from three elementary schools, seven churches, a retirement community and residential neighborhoods.

Continued on page 3

Source Watch

Satellite Tool Monitors Ecosystem Impacts from Biofuels

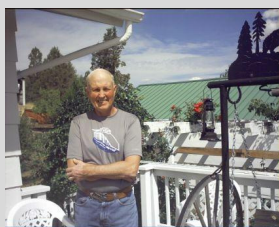
June 2, 2011 A new online tool uses satellite data to track impacts of biofuels expansion on global forest ecosystems and agricultural soil stocks.

BioCarbon Tracker maps the “ecosystems where biocarbon is stored, identifies vegetation at risk from land use change and monitors where...forest is converted to agriculture.”

The easy-to-use tool can be found at www.biocarbontracker.com. Users can map out an area up to 2.5 million hectares to determine the amount of carbon currently stored.

The project is funded by *Greenergy*, with involvement from *Ecometrica*, the *University of Edinburgh* and the *National Centre for Earth Observation*.

BIOMASS BUSTER of the Month Paul Fouch -- Oregon



“The plant and its operations and diesel fuel trucks will degrade the already bad air quality of nearby suburbs and all of our rural community because of its upwind location, and its size,” says Paul Fouch, President of *Save Our Rural Oregon*, the leading opposition to a 42-megawatt biomass power incinerator proposal in Klamath Falls, OR.

Paul fears the polluting facility will hurt the local economy by making it harder to “attract new clean industry, retirees, and tourists” and hold the community “in a cycle of poverty as slaves of the timber companies.” Learn more about *Save Our Rural Oregon*’s campaign and support its work at www.stopklamathbiomass.wordpress.com.



Clearcutting & tree-farming in Tennessee

(Photo: Southwings, North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy, Denny Haldeman)

USDA: 23 Million Acres of Southern Forests to Disappear in 50 Years

Below are excerpts from the “Southern Forest Futures Project: Summary Report,” *US Department of Agriculture*, May 12, 2011. The report predicts a loss of up to 23 million acres of Southern forests by 2060 due to biomass energy, urbanization, weather patterns, invasive species, and land ownership changes.

“Bioenergy futures could bring demands that are large enough to trigger changes in forest conditions, management, and market.

“Energy forecasts show wood use for bioenergy starting with and then quickly exhausting harvest residuals and other available wood waste. As a result, bioenergy demand would lead to additional harvesting of raw material, especially softwood pulpwood.

“Forecasts of wood use for bioenergy linked to U.S.D.A. projections suggests a 54- to 113-percent expansion of harvesting levels over current levels by 2050...lead[ing] to important changes in southern forests.

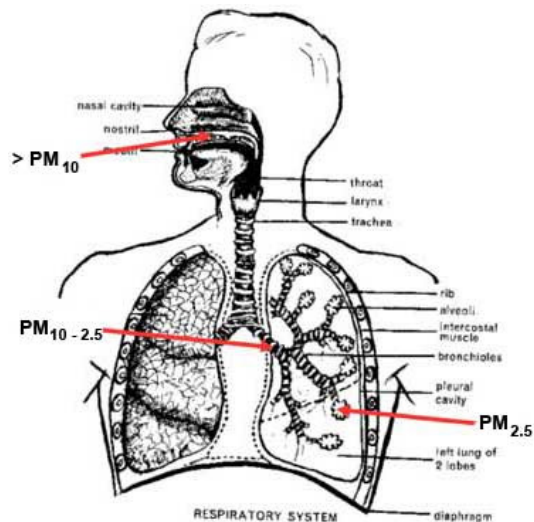
“Forecasted levels of woody biomass harvests could lead to a reduction of stand productivity, deterioration of biodiversity, depletion of soil fertility, and a decline in water quality.” ❖

Our Health

Medical Society Opposes Biomass Power

Below are excerpts from a May 17, 2011 medical report on biomass power incineration by Jefferson H. Dickey, MD of the *Pioneer Valley Physicians for Social Responsibility*.

“The US EPA estimates that... a daily increase of 25 mcg/m³ of PM_{2.5} is associated with an increase of about 5% in the cardiac and pulmonary mortality rates. The shape of the dose response relationship is roughly linear with no evidence of threshold. This means that any increase in PM levels will be associated with an increase in the mortality rate.



Particulate Matter can penetrate deep into lungs
(Photo: pca.state.mn.us)

“In addition to primary PM, secondary particles are formed in the atmosphere...These secondary particles are just the right size (less than 2.5 micrometer aerodynamic diameter, PM 2.5) to penetrate deeply into the lungs causing many adverse health effects, including shortening life expectancy. These small particles are the pollutant of greatest concern from biomass combustion.

“Hundreds of epidemiologic studies have described an association between combustion related air pollutants and a broad array of adverse health effects ranging from rhinorrhea to cardiac arrest.” ❖

State Lines (continued)

Springfield, Mass. City Council Revokes Biomass Power Permit

(source: Shane Symolon, WWLP.com, May 23, 2011)

The Springfield, Massachusetts City Council has voted 9-2 to revoke a special use permit for the construction of a 35-megawatt biomass power incinerator by *Palmer Renewable Energy*.

“The concerns that have been expressed over the air pollution from this kind of project, that kind of concern is going to carry the day,” said Sue Reid, of *Conservation Law Foundation*, one of several organizations and citizens groups that organized to oppose the facility.

Springfield is designated an “environmental justice” community by the EPA, with its population having a significant percentage of low-income residents and people of color.



Springfield, MA residents cheering Council decision
(Photo: Shane Symolon, wwlp.com, May 23, 2011)

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Closes Two Incinerators

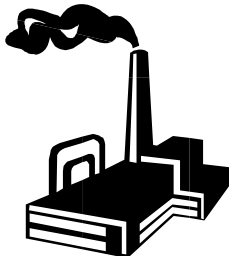
May 5, 2011 *Mecklenburg Solid Waste* has stated they will not recommend engaging with *ReVenture* to build a trash gasification incinerator, which would have burned 370,000 tons of garbage per year. The decision follows the news that the *BMWNC* medical waste incinerator has closed and will be decommissioned.

State Lines (cont.)

Port of Stockton, Calif. Coal Burner to Convert to Biomass Power

(source: *Brighter Energy News*, June 15, 2011)

The *Port of Stockton District Energy Facility* will be converting from burning coal to 100% biomass power, after receiving a permit from the *San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District*. The facility would provide 45-megawatts of electricity.



The developer, *DTE Energy Services*, has already made similar conversions in Cassville, Wisconsin and another project is moving forward in Bakersfield, Calif.

Aside from conversion of coal facilities to burning biomass, a current trend is co-firing biomass with coal, which allows coal facilities to remain open while qualifying for “renewable” energy incentives. ❖

D.C. Watch

BCAP’s Rocky Road

The *Biomass Crop Assistance Program* (BCAP) provides funding for growing as well as the harvest, storage and transportation of biomass feedstocks to facilities for burning. The program, administered by *US Department of Agriculture*, has had a rocky road.

Environmental groups challenged USDA for failing to undertake review of BCAP funding proposals as specified by the *National Environmental Policy Act*. Funding was halted and then later reinstated. In June 2011 BCAP funding was cut under a new US House agriculture

Alternatives

Clothes Dryer vs. Clothesline

www.laundrylist.org



About 5.8 percent of residential electricity use goes towards the clothes dryer, according to DOE EIA statistics. If all Americans would use the clothesline or wooden drying racks, the savings would be enough to close several power plants [**wood-based biomass power makes up 0.9% of 2010 U.S. electricity generation**].

Project Laundry List provides a fairly sophisticated “Green Laundry Calculator,” which you can save on your computer as an Excel file.

It typically costs 30 to 40 cents to dry a load of laundry in an electric dryer and approximately 15 to 20 cents in a gas dryer. Over its expected lifetime of 18 years, the average clothes dryer will cost you approximately \$1,530 to operate. ❖

appropriations bill.

Ironically, on the same day, USDA approved a controversial BCAP proposal to plant 200,000 acres of a non-native, invasive grass, *Miscanthus*, across four states. BCAP funding has mostly landed more profits into the hands of big agribusiness and logging companies in addition to biomass power incinerator developers.

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 incinerators out of their towns!