

PRESS RELEASE

EU threatens to torpedo its own climate protection policy

Brussels, Aug. 30, 2022 – **With the EU Parliament's vote on the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) on Sept. 13, 2022, the European Parliament is in danger of letting both the Green Deal and the "Fit for 55" initiative fail. With a vote to reject reforms [proposed](#) by the Environment Committee that would largely remove forest biomass from the RED III, and thus allow burning forest biomass to continue as the EU's main source of renewable energy, MEPs could jeopardize saving the climate and risk continued yearly emissions of more than 300 million tonnes CO₂ from burning wood for energy. That is [20 times the amount](#) that has been emitted by fires in key countries this summer.**

“The European Commission’s own scientists have concluded that logging and burning forest wood for energy increases CO₂ emissions compared to fossil fuels, and further degrades Europe’s forests,” says Mary S. Booth, director of the Partnership for Policy Integrity (PFPI), an NGO that is part of a coalition seeking to remove forest biomass from the RED. “Climate science clearly points to the need to restore and protect forests – not log them for fuel.”

The rules governing the EU’s treatment of wood-burning for renewable energy, and its eligibility for subsidies, are set out in the RED. Although burning wood for energy [emits](#) more CO₂ per megawatt-hour than coal, EU policy forces citizens to pay billions in renewable energy subsidies to wood-burning power plants, including coal plants that have converted to burning wood. While some policymakers claim burning wood can fill the gap left by reduced fossil fuel imports from Russia, [analysis](#) reveals that replacing just 10% of Russian fossil fuels with wood would require increasing wood-burning by 60%. Any such increase in logging would fatally undermine EU’s legislated goals to restore nature and reduce emissions.

Hundreds of scientists have warned EU policymakers that failure to reform biomass policies jeopardizes the EU’s ability to reduce emissions, and more than 110 NGOs have endorsed a [petition](#) calling for taking forest biomass out of the RED. A coalition of those NGOs will intensify their protest in the run-up to the decision of the EU Parliament in the coming weeks. Along with this, a series of further press releases will inform about the devastating consequences of RED III.

Forest Defenders is a group of NGOs from all over the world that work on forest protection. The more than 100 NGOs that have endorsed the [petition](#) calling for forest biomass to be taken out of the RED II; and a core group of NGOs that have endorsed the “forest principles,” a prescription for an EU forest policy that would protect biodiversity and climate.

For further information please see

https://forestdefenders.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Backgrounder_forest-biomass.pdf

Media contact:

Klaus-Henning Groth

Klaus-henning@forestdefenders.eu

Mobile: +49 172 44 93 366