

January 18, 2023

An Open Letter to European Union Policymakers:

Our organizations are once again sounding the alarm concerning the forest destruction taking place in the United States and Canada to feed Europe's ever-growing demand for wood pellet fuel. Over the past decade, scientists, independent watchdogs, and the media have exposed the false claims and greenwashing of the wood pellet industry, documented the damaging logging practices, including in mature and old growth forests in the U.S. Southeast and British Columbia, and exposed the racial injustice of wood pellet facilities siting, yet the EU has still not changed the renewable energy policies that are driving this destruction.

We are especially concerned that the package of reforms now under consideration in the Trilogue of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) falls far short of what is needed to reduce damage from the wood pellet industry. For how long will European leaders ignore the science of climate change and treat burning woody biomass as "zero-carbon," renewable energy? For how long will you countenance the continued destruction of forests for fuel, rather than invest in true climate solutions? Climate scientists agree that in order to halt global warming, we must both reduce carbon emissions and increase carbon storage, yet the EU's so-called reforms to the RED will allow clearcutting of forests for wood pellets to continue. It is sheer folly to continue on this path of destruction, from both a climate and a biodiversity perspective. We have seen that a number of EU member states have lost their forest carbon sinks, a trend that is obviously related to overexploitation of forests, including for biomass. Until the EU stops incentivizing burning trees for energy, member states will rely ever more heavily on importing wood pellets from the US and Canada to meet their energy needs. Must we burn up all our forest carbon sinks before sanity prevails?

Scientists and NGOs from both North America and Europe have been calling on the EU to significantly reform its treatment of forest bioenergy for a decade. RED II did not deliver meaningful reforms, and the US and Canadian pellet industries have grown even further since it was adopted. To meet its commitments to protecting the global climate and biodiversity, the EU must stop incentivizing burning primary forest biomass as renewable energy. We urge you to make these changes now, during the current Trilogue on the RED III.

Signed,

A Beautiful Future (Massachusetts)  
A Community Voice - Louisiana (Louisiana)  
ADOS Mississippi/ ADOS Empowerment Project (Mississippi)  
Alliance for the Wild Rockies (Montana)  
Anthropocene Alliance (Florida)  
Athens County's Future Action Network (Ohio)  
Back Bay Mission (Mississippi)  
Biofuelwatch US (National)  
Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project (Oregon)  
Carolina Wetlands Association (North Carolina)  
Castle Porter (Vermont)

Center for Biological Diversity (National)  
Central Oregon Bitter Brush Broads Chapter/ Great Old Broads for Wilderness (Oregon)  
Cherokee Concerned Citizens (Mississippi)  
Citizens Committee for Flood Relief (Missouri)  
Citizens United for Renewable Energy (CURE) (New Jersey)  
Clean Energy Action (Colorado)  
Climate Action Group, Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence (Massachusetts)  
Coastal Plain Conservation Group (North Carolina)  
Colorado Democratic Party - Energy & Environmental Initiative (Colorado)  
Concerned Citizens of Franklin County (Massachusetts)  
Concerned Citizens of Richmond County (North Carolina)  
Conservation Council of New Brunswick (New Brunswick)  
Conservation North (British Columbia)  
Doctors and Scientists Against Wood Smoke Pollution (National)  
Dogwood Alliance (US Southeast)  
Earth Action, Inc. (Florida)  
Earth Neighborhood Productions (Oregon)  
Ecology Action Centre (Nova Scotia)  
Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate and Health Organization (EEEECHO) (Mississippi)  
Elders Climate Action (National)  
Empower Our Future (Colorado)  
Environmental Integrity Project (National)  
Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (California)  
Environmental Protection Information Center- EPIC (California)  
Families for Clean Air (California)  
Fannie Lou Hamer Center For Change (Mississippi)  
FCCPR Climate Crisis Task Force (Massachusetts)  
Forest Keeper (North Carolina)  
Forests Forever (California)  
Friends of Big Ivy (North Carolina)  
Friends of the Bitterroot (Montana)  
Friends of the Clearwater (Montana)  
Green Cove Defense Committee (Washington)  
Green Snohomish (Washington)  
Greening Greenfield (Massachusetts)  
Healthy Forest Coalition (Nova Scotia)  
Healthy Gulf (Mississippi)  
I Heart Pisgah (North Carolina)  
Interfaith Earthkeepers Eugene/Springfield Oregon (Oregon)  
John Muir Project (National)  
Macon Farms (North Carolina)  
Massachusetts Forest Watch (Massachusetts)  
Micah Six Eight Mission (Louisiana)  
Mighty Earth (Washington, DC)  
Mississippi Center for Cultural Production (Mississippi)  
Mississippi Rising Coalition (Mississippi)  
National Wildlife Federation (National)  
Natural Resources Defense Council (National)  
Nature Nova Scotia (Nova Scotia)  
New Alpha CDC (South Carolina)  
New Bethel CDC (Mississippi)  
New Progressive Alliance (National)  
Nuclear Information and Resource Service ("for a nuclear-free, carbon-free world") (National)  
Occupy Bergen County (New Jersey)

Old-Growth Forest Network (Maryland)  
One Voice (Mississippi)  
Oxfam (International)  
Partnership for Policy Integrity (National)  
Petal Healing Garden (Mississippi)  
Pivot Point (Washington)  
Plastic Ocean Project (North Carolina)  
Program Believe (Mississippi)  
Rachel Carson Council (Maryland)  
RedTailed Hawk Collective (North Carolina)  
RerootD Futures Initiative (Mississippi)  
Resist the Pipeline (Massachusetts)  
RESTORE: The North Woods (Massachusetts)  
Sav-R-Youth Sav-R -Future (Mississippi)  
Save Massachusetts Forests (Massachusetts)  
Slingshot (Massachusetts)  
Sound Resource Mgt. Group, Inc. (Colorado)  
Southern Environmental Law Center (Southeast US)  
Southern Forests Conservation Coalition (North Carolina)  
SouthWings (North Carolina)  
Spruill Farm Conservation Project (North Carolina)  
Stand.earth (British Columbia)  
Standing Trees (Vermont)  
Steps Coalition (Mississippi)  
Sustainable Rogue Valley (Oregon)  
The Climate Center (California)  
The Enviro Show (Massachusetts)  
The Imani Group (South Carolina)  
The Rewilding Institute (New Mexico)  
Third Act Ohio (Ohio)  
350 Eugene (Oregon)  
350 Salem (Oregon)  
350 Seattle (Washington)  
350 Sonoma (California)  
350 Triangle (North Carolina)  
350PDX (Oregon)  
350VT (Vermont)  
Thurston Climate Action Team (Washington)  
Two Degrees Northampton (Massachusetts)  
Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence, Climate Action Group (Massachusetts)  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Jackson (Mississippi)  
Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (Iowa)  
Vel Scott's Healthy You (Ohio)  
Vermonters for a Clean Environment (Vermont)  
Wellspring Spa (Washington)  
West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Airr and Safe Jobs (California)  
Wild Heritage (California)  
Yaak Valley Forest Council (Montana)  
Youth United for Community Action (California)  
Zena Forest LLC (Oregon)  
Marion Edey, Founder, League of Conservation Voters (Maryland)  
Bill McKibben, Author, Founder, 350.org and Third Act (Vermont)

Messages from the U.S. and Canada:

John R. Spruill, Spruill Farm Conservation Project (Washington County, North Carolina)

*Our farm is within the economically efficient logging radius of two wood pellet plants operated by Enviva. I see clear cut logging of naturally-generated, mixed species hardwood forests, including some in wetlands, in my County of Washington all around my farm. There is no compulsory replanting of trees of any species following such clearcutting, nor is there any requirement that the landowner leave the land as forest land. This is causing huge loss of diversity and degradation of water quality in creeks and rivers near the clearcutting.*

Andy Wood, Coastal Plain Conservation Group (Edenton, North Carolina)

*The egregious wood pellet to energy scheme is being orchestrated upon rural regions of North America and Canada, with apparent and observable corporate disregard for members of communities inevitably and negatively impacted by cumulative environmental harms to air and water, ecosystem integrity, and biodiversity. These impacts are in addition to the inescapable fact that this energy scam requires more energy in its tree harvesting, wood processing, and pellet transporting phases, than the energy provided by burning pellets to generate electricity. Plus, burning wood pellets produces more CO<sub>2</sub> than burning coal to achieve an equal amount of electricity. In short, the wood pellet to electricity scheme is the opposite of what is needed for the benefit of today's grandchildren, tomorrow.*

Bob Bancroft, Nature Nova Scotia (Halifax, Nova Scotia)

*Too much of our forests are being lost, too fast.*