

**From:** SLINGENBERG Yvon (CAB-ARIAS CAÑETE)  
**Sent:** Tuesday 17 November 2015 16:31  
**To:** CAB ARIAS CANETE ARCHIVES  
**Subject:** FW: The Problems with Wood Pellet Bioenergy: Eight New Developments

pls register

Yvon

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**From:** Hammel, Debbie [<mailto:DHamme@III>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 05, 2015 5:02 PM  
**To:** Hammel, Debbie  
**Cc:** Hammel, Debbie; [Sini.Eraja@III](mailto:Sini.Eraja@III); Duncan Law ([dl@duncanlaw.co.uk](mailto:dl@duncanlaw.co.uk))  
**Subject:** The Problems with Wood Pellet Bioenergy: Eight New Developments

Dear Sir/Madam,

EU member states increasingly rely on electricity generated by wood-burning power stations to meet their renewable targets. Some member states support these with vast amounts of subsidies. Drax in UK alone is estimated to have received at least [£340 million last year](#). These subsidies are paid under the assumption that bioenergy is a sustainable, carbon neutral form of energy. Yet studies show that burning wood pellets for electricity can result in higher greenhouse gas emissions than burning coal, exacerbating our impacts on climate change. At the same time the last remaining wetland forests in the US are threatened by European demand for such pellets.

The case against bioenergy and wood pellet production is heating up. Over the last few months a number of important developments have highlighted the destructive impact to biodiversity and ecosystems, exposed the faulty carbon accounting that is the backbone of the industry, and revealed that negative impacts that wood pellet production is having on the economy and people of the Southern US. Below is a synopsis of eight recent developments:

**1. New Report Reveals Wood Pellet Production Threatens Wetlands** - The last remaining wetland forests in the Southern US are under imminent threat of destruction by the emerging wood pellet industry, according to a new report by NRDC. The report assesses the potential scale of the threat from existing and planned wood pellet mills to some of the most biologically rich wetland forests in the US - bottomland hardwood forests. Findings reveal that millions of acres of these vulnerable forests are in the bulls-eye of these facilities' potential sourcing areas. The data shows the geographic nexus between the region's unprotected bottomland hardwood forests and wood pellet manufacturing facilities. Download the report [HERE](#).

**2. Over 100,000 Americans have called on the UK and EU to end misguided biomass subsidies** - Over the last year, more than 100,000 people from across the Southern US have sent emails to Amber Rudd, the head of the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change, and leaders in the EU calling on these decision-makers to end misguided subsidies for burning wood for electricity at the expense of the environment,

communities and the climate in the US. You can see a short call to action video [HERE](#) , and a national action alert [HERE](#).

**3. New documented evidence of the use of whole trees and wetland forests for wood pellet production in the Southern US** - Multiple investigations initiated by US ENGO Dogwood Alliance have documented the increase in logging of whole trees and wetland forests in the production of wood pellets. Photographic evidence shows logging sites, trucks traveling to and from logging sites and unloading those logs at pellet mills. The most recent investigations can be viewed [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

**4. Two Independent Studies Assess CO2 Impacts of Wood Pellet Production in the South** – A Spatial Informatics Group LLC report assessed the atmospheric carbon effects of Enviva/Drax’s biomass practices using the BEAC (Biomass Emissions and Counterfactual) Model developed by DECC to evaluate the Enviva/Drax supply and combustion scenario. They found even using the most conservative estimates that emissions would still exceed the DECC carbon standard by four times, and would be at least 20% higher than continuing to burn coal. You can view the report [HERE](#)

In a second study, NRDC analyzed the climate pollution impacts of burning wood pellets produced in the US southeast and exported to the UK to produce electricity. They compared those emissions with coal and natural gas and showed that if the wood pellets are made of whole trees—even in relatively small proportions of about 12 percent—they will emit carbon pollution comparable to or in excess of fossil fuels for more than five decades. You can view the report [HERE](#).

**5. New Report Shows Negative Economic Impacts of Wood Pellet Manufacturing in the US South** - A new report examines the detrimental impact of wood pellet manufacturing on the long-term economic viability of the South and how it vastly outweighs short-term gains. “Wood Pellet Manufacturing: Risks for the Economy of the US South,” explores two major themes – the damage wood pellet production could have on the long-term viability of higher quality wood product manufacturing and markets, and the long-term consequences to the services and amenities forests provide rural and coastal communities. You can view the report [HERE](#).

**6. National Academy of Sciences report on biodiversity** - A report published this year from the National Academy of Sciences highlights a disturbing national conservation priority disconnect: While the nation’s highest concentrations of endemic bird, reptile and tree species diversity are found in the wetland forests of the US Southeast, the majority of protected forests are in the West. The Southeast US is the primary hotspot for wood pellet production mainly for the European market. You can read the study [HERE](#).

**7. Documenting the Impact of Wood Pellet Production on Local Communities** - A new short documentary, “Selling Out Sampson County: How the Wood Pellet Industry is Disrupting Rural Southern Communities,” examines the impact that the exponential growth of new wood pellet facilities is having on the economy, health, and quality of life in rural communities across the Southern US. You can view the documentary [HERE](#).

**8. US EPA Releases Clean Power Plan and Independent Scientists Back Strict Biomass Regulations** - In July, the US Environmental Protection Agency released the Clean Power Plan to regulate smoke stack carbon emissions from electric utilities. In it the agency expressed concern about biomass having a major role in a renewable energy future and also doubts that sustainability standards would be enough to ensure true carbon reductions. These findings were echoed in an earlier letter by 78 scientists from across the US to the agency. You can view the letter from them [HERE](#).

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions regarding these materials or would like additional information.

Best Regards,

**DEBBIE HAMMEL**

*Director, Land Markets Initiative*

**NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL**

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