

New Report: UK Commits to Protect Forests at COP27, While Spending £2 billion a Year Destroying Them

LONDON – 10 NOVEMBER, 2022 – Just days after the UK committed to increased forest protections at COP27, a new report reveals that it wasted almost £2 billion on subsidising the logging of forests for bioenergy in 2021.

The report by [Trinomics](#), *Government subsidies for electricity generation and combined heat and power (CHP) from solid biomass*, was commissioned by the [Natural Resources Defense Council \(NRDC\)](#). It shows that the United Kingdom is the biggest culprit in this, gifting more subsidies to bioenergy than the 11 other European countries analysed. In 2021, the UK gave £1.8 billion in subsidies to the bioenergy industry, a 70% increase from 2015.

The UK gives the vast majority of these subsidies to Drax—Britain’s top polluter, which burns wood taken from precious primary forests in Canada, the U.S., and Estonia, among other countries.

Unfortunately, the UK plans to give even more money of the country’s money away to this false renewable energy in the future. Indeed, Trinomics calculates that the UK’s future subsidy payments to a bioenergy carbon capture project at just one power plant may add up to £3.8 billion to UK families’ energy bills.

Instead that amount could instead insulate over 2.5 million homes in the UK, ultimately making them more efficient and actually saving them money by lowering their energy bills.

The UK Government hosted last year’s UN climate summit and Prime Minister Sunak is attending this year’s meeting in Egypt. But the UK’s international climate credibility is undermined by replacing burning coal with spending billions on burning the world’s forests.

Elly Pepper, Senior Advocate for NRDC, said: “The UK Government is forcing families and forests to pay the bill for an industry that is burning trees and worsening climate change. The UK and other governments, by wrongly claiming bioenergy is zero carbon, all have a hand on the axe that is bringing down the world’s forests. As we face climate disaster, governments like the UK must stop burning our planet’s forests for fuel under the guise of renewable energy. We need our forests to stop climate change and save nature. The UK Government should be subsidising real energy solutions that will actually save families money and keep them warm this winter.”

Lord Randall of Uxbridge said: “The fact that the UK just committed to halt and reverse forest loss at COP27 while it hands £2 billion a year to an industry that destroys forests is deeply disappointing. The UK cannot be a world leader in combatting climate change and biodiversity loss while putting bioenergy at the heart of its plans to meet net zero.”

Phil MacDonald, Chief Operating Officer of energy think tank Ember, said: “We now know that burning forest bioenergy is not just very expensive - it can contribute to climate change. A cheaper, cleaner alternative exists: the UK’s enormous wind power resource, which is being rapidly harnessed to generate electricity and lower energy bills. In the middle of an energy bill crisis, the UK must end

wasteful funding to bioenergy, and instead focus efforts on building truly emissions-free sources of electricity."

A link to the full report can be found [here](#).

A link to a blog on the report can be found [here](#).

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About the Natural Resources Defense Council

NRDC ([Natural Resources Defense Council](#)) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 3 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Bozeman, and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter [@NRDC](#).

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