

3rd October 2022

BBC PANORAMA INVESTIGATES THE 'GREEN ENERGY SCANDAL' AT DRAX

This evening, the BBC will air an episode of Panorama that shines a light on the 'green energy scandal' taking place at Drax, specifically its pellet operations in British Columbia. Drax has already received more than £6bn in green energy subsidies from the UK government – yet environmental experts have cast serious doubt on the sustainability of its biomass operations and the ongoing impact on some of the world's most precious forests.

I've included a series of reactions from climate experts below. If you would like to speak with any of them for more information after the programme airs, then please let me know.

In addition, Cut Carbon Not Forests will host a VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE EVENT ON 13TH OCTOBER, with representatives of the regions most impacted by UK biomass demand. If you'd like to attend, please find more details and registration here:

https://finnpartners.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_p8CsKQXPTnmHxUa8l-xgEg

Thanks, Richard

Maya Menezes, Senior Climate Justice Campaigner at Stand.Earth says:

"Coal companies masquerading as clean energy solutions are insidious on multiple levels. Using precious public funds earmarked for the just transition to a clean energy economy, in the middle of the climate crisis, while harming the poor and marginalised communities writ large is unconscionable. The science is clear on all ends of this supply chain, that not only is the biomass industry NOT carbon neutral, but communities themselves do not want this. Working people and the planet deserve truly clean energy solutions that put them and their families first over corporate profits. It's time to move beyond burning."

Elly Pepper, senior advocate at NRDC and member of the Cut Carbon Not Forests coalition, says:

"Every day, the UK government is harming some of our planet's most precious forests by subsidising the biomass industry. Burning trees for electricity jeopardises our climate, at-risk species, and communities around the world. It's not a climate strategy, it's climate hypocrisy. There needs to be a significant change from the current, and projected, biomass supply chain to ensure the UK's policies aren't undercutting climate and biodiversity goals in the name of renewable energy. There is nothing clean or renewable about Drax. It is the UK's biggest CO2 emitter and among Europe's top emitters of dangerous particulate matter, putting it in the same notorious category as the dirtiest coal plants on the continent. Any climate plans that continue to rely on biomass in the near or long term, without a major overhaul of the current rules, should be met with great scepticism."

Katy Brown, a campaigner with Cut Carbon Not Forests, says:

"That many customers are now struggling to pay their bills while we are in both a climate and energy crisis makes it particularly galling that the surcharge on our energy bills is supporting Drax, the UK's single biggest carbon emitter. Investing in wind and solar will bring down the cost of electricity and reduce our dependence on importing coal, gas, oil, or wood pellets from overseas. Burning coal, oil, gas or trees will only make the climate crisis worse and has no place in a sustainable future."