

PRESS RELEASE

DEMONSTRATIONS IN MULTIPLE COUNTRIES HIGHLIGHT DEVASTATING GLOBAL IMPACTS OF THE UK'S BIOMASS SUBSIDIES

LONDON - 28th September 2021, – In September and October 2021, a series of on-the-ground protests and peaceful gatherings will highlight the devastating global impacts of the UK Government's biomass energy policy on communities, forests, and the climate. The events will take place in Estonia, the US, Canada and the UK. The UK Government relies heavily on industrial-scale biomass burning for electricity and is Europe's top subsidiser of biomass energy. Biomass power stations in the UK burn millions of tonnes of imported wood pellets each year made mostly from whole trees. Wood pellets entering the UK energy market routinely come from clearcuts of mature and biodiverse hardwood forests.

With the climate COP weeks away and nearly a year after the UK Government's commitment to tackle the global biodiversity crisis by protecting 30 percent of its land and oceans by 2030 (an effort known as "30x30"), little has changed. Subsidies to large biomass power plants already cost UK energy bill payers nearly £3 million a day, even as Government officials are being lobbied to approve potentially billions more in subsidies for the industry in the decades to come.

Alongside the events, CCNF is urging the UK Government to end its reliance on large scale tree-burning for energy through a [petition](#).

International Day of Action on Biomass is on October 21, 2021.

"We are in the midst of a global climate and biodiversity crisis. Yet, 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," said Elly Pepper, a campaigner with Cut Carbon Not Forests.

"We hope these events raise awareness of the global harm caused by the UK's massive reliance on biomass energy. The UK Government must stop subsidising this dirty energy source."

On the ground events due to take place include:

- In the UK, Liverpool Port will hold a banner protest on September 29 to showcase local opposition to receiving millions of tonnes of wood pellets each year from across the Atlantic Ocean, en route to be burned for electricity in UK power stations. Local activists will also track a ship carrying wood pellets from North Carolina where Drax's top supplier Enviva sources trees to make into wood pellets. The goal will be to further highlight the polluting process of logging trees, manufacturing them into pellets, and transporting them around the world as fuel under the false guise of producing 'green' energy.
- On September 26, activists in Estonia gathered in a protected area that was clear cut for wood pellets to protest UK sourcing of biomass from mature and biodiverse Estonian forests. The area was formerly home to old-growth trees and protected species of moss and birds, such as the threatened three-toed woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*).

- In the US, events will be held in North Carolina, Mississippi and Georgia -- all three home to industrial wood pellet manufacturing facilities -- to demonstrate firsthand the effects of the industry on low income and communities of colour that bear the brunt of pollution from these plants.
- In British Columbia, Canada, activists will spotlight the need to end massive UK subsidies for dirty biomass electricity through large banner displays at the port used for pellet exports. The wood pellet industry is booming in Canada, threatening old and biodiverse forests. Canadian forests are the second largest source of wood pellets entering the UK energy market. Earlier this year, Drax completed its acquisition of Pinnacle Renewable Energy, the largest wood pellet manufacturer in Canada.

"I'm tired of the extractive industry setting up shop in black rural communities and the wood pellets that the UK is demanding are no different. Our long term health and climate are negatively impacted while the UK wants to be seen as some sort of climate leader for burning our forests. This is a true injustice." said Mr. Chambers, a concerned citizen living in Bond, Mississippi.

"The UK and other countries must stop relying on and subsidising biomass energy because it's harming our country's forests, including its protected areas. To call attention to this problem, this weekend we gathered in an area in Estonia that was a clearcut for biomass." Said Farištamo Eller, from Save Estonia's Forests.

"This special place used to be home to old aspen trees and threatened plant and animal species including mosses, lichens, and the three-toed woodpecker. Now, it's bare and quiet. The only way to get trees for wood pellets is to log forests, but forests are never just trees — they are homes."

Cut Carbon Not Forests was launched in June 2020. The campaign's goal is to remove subsidies from companies that burn trees for electricity and redirect UK biomass subsidies to real clean energy. It is led jointly by [Biofuelwatch](#), [Stand.earth](#), [Dogwood Alliance](#), NRDC ([Natural Resources Defense Council](#)) and the [Southern Environmental Law Center](#) (SELC).

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