

Biofuelwatch Newsletter March 2017

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Dear Subscriber,

Spring is (finally) here and with it brings renewed energy for campaigning to protect our planet.

Please read on for exciting recent campaign developments, upcoming events, our response to the new Trumpist threat and an opportunity to take urgent action to stop forest-destroying biomass power in the UK.

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biofuels or large-scale bioenergy in general? Please contact us and we will try and get a speaker.

You can also [make a donation](#), and get in contact with us [here](#).

1. New Chatham House research exposes Big Biomass

Last week [a damning report](#) on wood-based for bioenergy was released by Chatham House, an independent UK policy think-tank. The report confirms Biofuelwatch's (and many other NGOs' and scientists') arguments on biomass.

It showed that

- burning biomass releases more CO₂ per unit of energy than fossil fuels;
- claims that biomass is carbon neutral due to the forest carbon cycle are false and based on flawed logic;
- UK and EU carbon accounting rules for biomass are 'not fit for purpose', and
- growing demand for wood pellets for bioenergy is putting pressure on forests worldwide.

The reports were covered by major news outlets such as The Times front page and the BBC, with articles criticising subsidies for biomass (£817 million for UK biomass electricity last year alone) and labelling wood-burning schemes a ['disaster'](#) for the climate.

The report has caught the attention of some politicians, and now we need you to help us [put pressure on them to ditch biomass subsidies immediately](#) - the biomass industry and their supporters are already fighting back, peddling their ridiculous claims that burning wood can somehow be good for forests and the climate. Make sure your voice is heard as clearly as theirs!



2. Urgent action : Lobby your MP [NOW](#) to end biomass subsidies

The Chatham House reports have brought the biomass issue to the forefront of energy minister's minds.

We need you to write to your MP NOW calling for an end to biomass subsidies and an end to burning wood in power stations. The biomass industry is vulnerable at the moment, and we need to use this opportunity to build the momentum against them.

We have [uploaded a template letter to the website](#). You can send this to your MP in 3 easy steps:

- Look up your MP's email using your postcode at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>,
- Copy and paste the letter into an email to your MP and personalise with an initial paragraph explaining who you are and why you care.
- Send!

Please **personalise** your response because MPs increasingly ignore copy-and-paste responses - it can be as simple as a few lines stating "this is Biofuelwatch's response below, but I support it because..."

mentioning the Chatham House report.



3. Support real renewables : Sign 10:10's petition to save wind and solar

The current Government's attacks on wind and solar have ramped up a notch: last year, the government slashed the Feed-in-Tariff for small-scale solar, wind and hydro by 65%, changed planning rules so they are weighted against onshore wind turbines (but never mind all those fracking drill rigs, they aren't thought to be a blight on the landscape) and capped total payout to new solar schemes at £100 million over 3 years. As you may know, biomass electricity currently receives £800 million every year.

As if that wasn't enough, they're now [imposing a tax hike](#) on schools and businesses that invest in solar panels.

We don't need to tell you how outrageous and self-destructive this is. One small thing you can do to help is [sign 10:10's Blown Away petition](#) to demand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer reinstate and increase support for onshore wind and solar.



4. Campaign Update : Ditch Coal Now protest in London

On 8th February, some of us joined Coal Action Network, London Mining Network, and Friends of the Earth for a protest outside the department for Business, Energy and Industrial Solutions (BEIS). This was timed to coincide with the final day of the government's consultation on the phase-out of coal, to tell them that for people whose health and livelihoods are being destroyed by the coal industry, 2025 is too long to wait for this toxic industry to end.

2900 clay figures were brought onto the street outside BEIS, to remind the government of the number of people who will die from coal-related pollution each year that they stall on acting to end it. How many deaths does the government think is acceptable?

Under Government proposals, coal power stations could stay open well beyond 2025 if they burn large amounts off wood, together with coal. We will continue

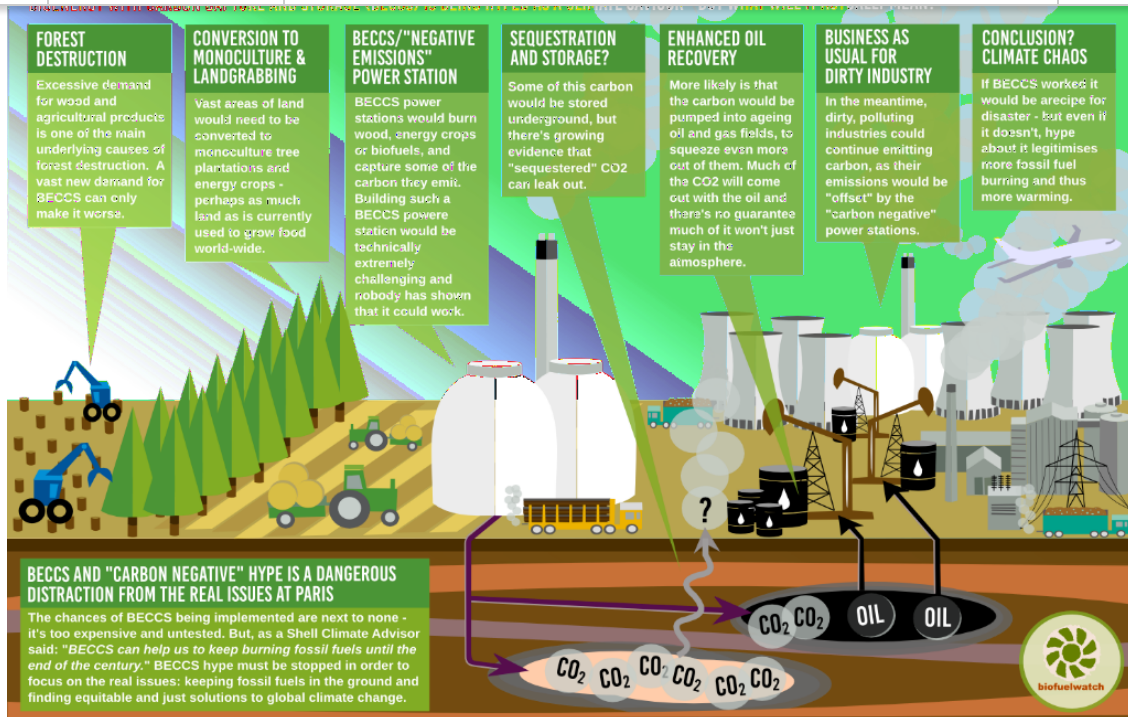


5. What does Trump's presidency mean for Energy Justice campaigning?

On Since our last newsletter, the political landscape has shifted drastically with Trump's inauguration. It is a frightening time, as we fear that what little protection our environment and human rights have will be swept away under a new ultra-corporate and nationalistic agenda.

However, US activists are resisting, and resisting hard, and concerned people around the globe are joining them. People who have been passive for many years may be waking up at last. Now is the time to come together to build alliances, to join the broad, international opposition to Trump's agenda, uniting behind a vision of human rights and ecological stewardship.

You can read our [full statement](#) on Trump's presidency and its effect on energy and climate campaigning, and particularly on bioenergy, on our website.



6. BECCS and Carbon Capture with Coal

By now you have probably heard of the idea of BECCS: Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage. The idea is that CO₂ from biomass-burning power stations could be captured and pumped underground to be 'sequestered'. If successful, BECCS would require many hundreds of millions of hectares of land to be converted to new biomass plantations, as well as vast amounts of freshwater and fertilisers. However, there appears to be no realistic prospect of BECCS ever becoming technically feasible on a larger scale. Biofuelwatch regards it as a dangerous distraction from the need to end fossil fuel burning as soon as possible.

During February, a (US-based) Biofuelwatch representative attended a workshop in Berkeley, California, focused on negative emissions technologies (NETs) and carbon dioxide removal (CDR). NETs and CDR are climate geoengineering techniques that propose to suck carbon pollution out of the sky, with Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) as the most hyped technique.

Please click [here](#) to read our report back from the CDR/NETs workshop.

Our view that BECCS is not feasible was bolstered this month, when the

station with coal-based carbon capture at all. See [here](#) about the fate of this \$7.1 billion failure.

7. Watch this space : #AxeDrax events coming up in the Spring!

It's Spring again, so Drax's AGM is fast-approaching and we are planning to have a presence. We expect it to be in late April and will send out a notice to supporters as soon as we have a date.

We will be there to send a clear message to Drax's shareholders and investors that Drax is a dangerous waste of money, burning forests and heating the climate. We also plan to visit Schroders, one of Drax's major investors in the city of London, on the same day, to let them know that by putting money into Drax they are aiding and abetting deforestation, climate change and air pollution.

This is usually a creative and colourful demo, and there is lots to do to make this one successful, so please contact us if you want to be involved! We will be having at least one more meeting and one more banner and prop-making session in London before the event.

We are hoping there will be capacity among local people to do a banner protest at Drax Power Station itself or an information-sharing event in a town near Drax or on its supply chain.

There will be a meeting in Leeds in the next few weeks - keep an eye on the facebook page for details! If you have any ideas for this local protest or just want to register your interest, please email biofuelwatch@ymail.com.

If you want to be involved in preparing for the London protest(e.g. making banners and placards), please contact us by email or contact [Biomassive](#) on Facebook.

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