

Biofuelwatch UK April News Update

This is the second edition of our monthly newsletter, with details of recent and upcoming events and news from campaigns throughout the UK. Please let us know if you would like more information about particular campaign issues/news. If you are looking for news about biomass campaigning in the US, then please see www.energyjustice.net/biomass/monitor.

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1) Taking DRAXtic Action - just over a week to go!

With our Drax AGM protest drawing close we're doing what we can to get word out about it. The banner protest will start at 12 noon outside the Grocers' Hall, Princes Street, EC2R 8AD - for those who can come earlier, we'll be flyering at the same location from 10.30 am. For full details, including a link to a map, see <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/alerts/drax-protest/>.

If you haven't done so already please invite all your friends along on our Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/469123789809401/>. You can also support us by getting your organisation to formally support Taking DRAXtic Action (16 have signed up so far), and by forwarding our Media Advisory to your contacts here: <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2013/taking-draxtic-action-media-advisory/>.

We look forward to seeing many of you next week!

2) Green Investment Bank still banking on big biomass

Biofuelwatch meets with representatives of the bank to discuss their investments into big biomass. Read it online here: <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2013/the-green-investment-bank-still-banking-on-big-biomass/>

On the 20th of March Biofuelwatch were invited to attend a meeting with the Green Investment Bank (GIB). The request came in response to our e-alert that was launched in February calling on people to write to the chair of the GIB to demand an end to their substantial investments in big biomass.

After only a few weeks of going live online, over a thousand people had participated in Biofuelwatch's e-alert by sending a letter to Lord Smith, the bank's Chairperson, demanding that the GIB commit to not funding any more big biomass projects. In particular, the letter highlighted the fact that burning biomass is as socially and environmentally devastating as burning coal is, and so cannot be considered a green investment.

Our meeting with the GIB proved frustrating, however, and unfortunately they're no closer to committing not to finance any more big bioenergy projects. The meeting highlighted some serious contradictions in the way the GIB currently operates, and we're still waiting for a response from Vince Cable on these issues. For the full article written following our meeting please see the link above, and if you haven't taken part in our alert you can do here:

<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2013/green-bank-alert/>

3) Petitions against palm oil expansion in Palawan, Philippines

An Indigenous Peoples organisation on Palawan has published a new report about environmental and social destruction caused by oil palm plantations on the island. The report can be downloaded from www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2013/palawan-report/. They are asking for solidarity through signing two petitions against oil palm expansion in Palawan. Please note that those go to different recipients, so it is helpful to sign both:

www.thepetitionsite.com/797/568/375/philippines-stop-the-plundering-of-indigenous-territories-by-oil-palm-plantations/

www.change.org/petitions/philippines-stop-oil-palm-expansion-on-palawan-unesco-man-biosphere-reserve#share

4) Scottish Update

As we had feared, the Scottish Government has now pushed through long-term subsidies (Renewable Obligation Certificates or ROCs) for large biomass power stations. Although large biomass power stations will now have to be classed as 'combined heat and power' (CHP) in order to attract subsidies, any power station that makes use of just a tiny fraction of its heat (e.g. for drying their own woodchips) will pass that hurdle, rendering it meaningless.

Decisions on Forth Energy's planning applications in Grangemouth and Rosyth are still outstanding. In Dundee, Forth Energy have now submitted their final air quality documents as part of the planning process. Following a further public consultation, Dundee City Council's Planning Committee will vote on whether to object to the application (in which case it will go through a full planning inquiry) or whether to approve it (in which case the Scottish Government is much more likely to give the green light).

Over coming weeks, Biofuelwatch will be working closely with local campaigners, especially with Friends of the Earth Tayside to build a strong local campaign against this proposal. If you live in or near Dundee and would like to get involved, please get in touch with us.

5) International Day of Action Against Native Forest Bioenergy

Australian forest and climate campaigners called for an International Day of Action Against Native Forest Bioenergy for today, 15th April. For more information and a run-down of what's been happening please see the Biomassacre website here:

<http://biomassacre.com/>