




This is the November edition of our monthly Biofuelwatch UK newsletter, with details of recent news from bioenergy campaigns. Please let us know if you would like more information about particular campaign issues/news or if you'd like to find out about getting involved in any relevant campaigns. If you are looking for news about biomass campaigning in the US, then please see <http://energyjustice.net/biomass/monitor>

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### Guaranteeing disaster for communities and forests: Say no to Public Loan Guarantees for biomass

New alert:

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



Want to get in touch, or get involved in one of our campaigns? Please email [biofuelwatch@ymail.com](mailto:biofuelwatch@ymail.com)

As you've probably noticed, this is a different style of

In July 2013, the UK government announced an infrastructure loan guarantee scheme for energy, road and rail projects, with the declared aim of boosting economic growth. Under the UK Guarantee Scheme, private companies are guaranteed that, if anything goes wrong with their investment which causes them to default on loans to a bank or another lender, the government will pay back those loans for them, out of general taxation. In other words, tax payers carry the risk of private investments.

Energy companies have been at the forefront of applying for such guarantees. The Government unit responsible for infrastructure support - Infrastructure UK (part of the Treasury) - does not even try to greenwash their decisions with terms such as 'sustainable' or 'low carbon'

any problems reading it or suggestions for improvement, please let us know. Thanks!

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and keep burning coal as well as increasing amounts of imported wood pellets. There is strong [evidence linking Drax's pellet imports to the destruction of highly biodiverse and carbon rich wetland forests in the southern US](#).

Now, the government has announced a [list of 17 projects that have 'prequalified' for loan guarantees](#) - 10 of them energy projects. Those include three large biomass electricity schemes, posing a serious threat to forests and communities. Other energy projects listed include unconventional (coalbed methane) gas, nuclear power and waste incineration. The three biomass electricity schemes which may be underwritten by the government are:

- The proposed conversion of the **2000 MW Eggborough coal power station to biomass**
- A **100 MW biomass power station proposed by Helius Energy in Avonmouth** near Bristol
- A **60 MW biomass and waste power station proposed by Tilbury Green Power** in Tilbury

*Please tell the Government that they must not offer loan guarantees to those destructive biomass schemes! Your letter will be automatically sent to the UK Treasury. If you can personalise your message, it may have greater impact. Take part here:*

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

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### **Solidarity with communities in Maranhão, Brazil threatened by tree plantations for biomass and paper**

Sign the petition here:

<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2013/maranhao-petition/>

In the Brazilian state of Maranhão, the livelihoods and land rights of traditional communities are under

eucalyptus plantations, some of them for producing paper, others for **producing wood pellets for UK or other European power stations**. Suzano's eucalyptus plantation developments have been causing serious land conflicts in Maranhão's Baixo Parnaíba since 2005. Recently, the situation has become even worse as Suzano has started investing in new, very fast-growing and dense plantations with a view to producing wood pellets for export. The company entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in 2010 to **supply a UK company, MGT Power**, that has planning permission for a large biomass power station in Teeside and is proposing another one in Tyneside. Many communities are also facing the destruction of their lands and savannah forests by large landowners for soya monocultures.

Communities in Baixo Parnaíba have been living in harmony with the region's highly biodiverse Cerrado ecosystem and they heavily rely on harvesting fruits from native trees for their livelihoods. Suzano, on the other hand, is bulldozing trees and all other vegetation to clear the way for eucalyptus monocultures. Ironically, they are seeking to market their wood pellets from these plantations as 'renewable energy'.

To find out more about Suzano's plantations and the threats to communities and to biodiversity in that region, please click [here](#).

Communities have asked for international solidarity with their struggle to have their rights to the land recognised. Recognition of their land tenure would protect both their livelihoods and the savannah forests and biodiversity of the region. **Please support them by signing our petition [here](#). We will forward your message to the World Rainforest Movement who will send it to the relevant authorities in Brazil. The petition calls for the communities' land rights to be formally recognised and guaranteed.**

the communities in Baixo Parna ba, then please email [wrm@wrm.org.uy](mailto:wrm@wrm.org.uy) to endorse the original letter found [here](#).



Community meeting in S o Raimundo, Maranh o

## **Biomass:** *The Chain of Destruction*

### **Biomass: The Chain of Destruction – new report & public meeting**

Biofuelwatch has released a new report, [\*Biomass: The Chain of Destruction\*](#). It explores the global impacts of the UK’s biomass boom, looking at what the current the demand for biomass for electricity, supportive Government policy and resulting speculative investments mean in terms of forest destruction in the Americas and impacts on communities in the UK. It also includes ***Eucalyptus Plantations for Energy: A Case Study of Suzano’s plantations for wood pellet exports in the Baixo Parna ba region, Maranh o, Brazil***, the first documented case of a land-grab in Brazil for biomass destined for power stations in the UK. The authors of the Brazilian case study are Ivonete

The report can be downloaded here:

<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2013/chain-of-destruction/>

The report is summarised in an article by Almuth Ernsting published in the **Ecologist magazine**, and can be found [here](#).

The report was launched at our public meeting ***A Burning Issue: Biomass and its impacts on forests and communities***. Some 70 people came to the Lumen Centre in London to hear the following speakers:

- **Winnie Overbeek**, Coordinator of the World Rainforest Movement, spoke via videolink on the impacts of eucalyptus plantations in Maranhão, Brazil, being developed to produce wood pellets for export, including to the UK;
- **Scot Quaranda**, Campaigns Director, Dogwood Alliance, spoke via videolink about the impacts of wood pellet exports, including to Drax and Ironbridge, on southern US forests;
- **Sophie Bastable**, Biofuelwatch, spoke about the impacts of biomass electricity on UK communities and presented research into the links between social deprivation and biomass power station location in the UK;
- **Donna Liley**, Mosseley Environmental Action Group, spoke about the impacts of wood dust on her community.

Presentations and videos from the public meeting can be found here:

<http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/2013/burning-issue-recording/>



#### 4. Wood Bioenergy: Green Land Grabs For Dirty “Renewable”™ Energy

Download the report here:

<http://globalforestcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/GFC-wood-bioenergy-update-FINAL-OCT.pdf>

The Global Forest Coalition and Biofuelwatch launched a new report last month at the Convention on Biodiversity in Montreal, Canada. The report highlights the impacts of expanding use of wood for generating industrial scale electricity and heat, especially in Europe and North America. The report points to EU demand where both dedicated biomass facilities and conversion of coal plants to biomass are resulting in a new international trade in wood pellets. Estimates are that the UK alone will burn pellets made from 82 million tonnes of wood, eight times the country’s total domestic wood production. Most pellets are now being imported from forests in the southern USA and British Columbia, Canada, but other regions are being eyed as potential future sources.

The report was launched in conjunction with the U.S. biomass industry’s “National Bioenergy Day” on Oct 17th. A network of North American activists launched a counter event, “Bioenergy Truth Day” and encouraged people to contact their representatives and demand that legislation intended to open up federal lands for biomass logging under the false pretense of “restoration” and “wildfire prevention” be halted.

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