



EUROPEAN
ENVIRONMENTAL
BUREAU



Mr. Arias Cañete
Commissioner for Energy and Climate Action
European Commission
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Brussels, 10 December 2014

Dear Commissioner Arias Cañete,

BirdLife Europe and the European Environmental Bureau endorse and want to bring to your attention an **appeal by 5 conservation organizations from the United States and by more than 50 000 individual American citizens to change EU's policies on bioenergy** and to stop incentivizing cutting of Southern US forests for energy use.

As a result of EU's efforts to increase the use of renewable energy, use of bioenergy and particularly of wood is rapidly increasing. The growing demand is driving the expansion of wood pellet manufacturing and exporting in the South East US, resulting to more than 30 new pellet mills currently proposed just to feed European power stations.

Citizens of US states such as North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia and Florida feel how the production of these wood pellets from their forests negatively affects their health, the environment, climate and their quality of life. Tens of thousands of people therefore joined the call on a National Day of Action, held 13 November to send a message to you with the call 'Save Our Southern Forests!'. These people see the impacts of EU's renewable energy policies in their local forests, and see that there's no adequate legal framework in place to protect even the most biodiversity rich kinds of forests or to limit the use of wood for energy only to forest residues.

BirdLife Europe and the European Environmental Bureau support the ambition of President Juncker for the EU to become 'world number one in renewable energies' but insists that this can and must be done by increasing the share of renewable energy needs in a sound and sustainable way, without adverse environmental impacts.

This requires that effective safeguards for the use of bioenergy are put in place as part of the 2030 climate and energy policy framework. Safeguards are needed to ensure that the bioenergy accounted towards EU's renewable energy target really delivers greenhouse gas savings, and doesn't just transfer emissions from the energy sector to the forest and land sectors. Safeguards are also needed to limit the use of biomass to match sustainable availability of biobased resources in the EU and to minimize negative environmental impacts.

We, together with organizations and citizens who have sent you the 'Save Our Southern Forests' message, rely on you to take action.

To further discuss the impacts on US forests and citizens of our bioenergy policies and opportunities to tackle negative impacts, **we would also like to offer to organize a meeting with representatives of the US organizations signing the accompanied message.** We would appreciate an opportunity to discuss these issues further with you on the first weeks of February.

Yours sincerely,



Angelo Caserta
Regional Director
Stichting Birdlife Europe



Jeremy Wates
Secretary General
European Environmental Bureau

December 11, 2014

Dear Commissioner Miguel Arias Cañete,

I am writing to express my concerns about the devastation to forests and communities in the Southern United States caused by the rapidly increasing demand for wood pellets that are being burned in European power stations. I ask you to take action now to **Save Our Southern** forests.

As you are well aware, the increased demand for wood as a fuel source in the EU and particularly in the United Kingdom is driving the expansion of wood pellet manufacturing and export in the Southern US. The production of these wood pellets from our forests negatively affects our health, environment, climate and quality of life. This is an SOS message - Save Our Southern Forests!

The large-scale burning of wood pellets is not a solution to climate change or a feasible alternative to coal. Mounting scientific research shows that burning wood pellets manufactured from trees will increase near-term carbon emissions and accelerate climate change. A recent report released by the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change confirms that all scenarios in which whole trees or coarse woody residuals are used for wood pellets produce a result that is not carbon beneficial.

Additionally, our living forests provide many benefits. Standing forests are our best defense against climate change through gathering and storing carbon. Forests provide our communities with clean air to breathe, water to drink and natural protection from flooding and hurricanes. They are home to countless species of plants and animals found nowhere else on earth. Cutting them down as a solution to the climate crisis is bad policy and makes no sense. We can no longer invest in forest destruction; we need to focus on forest conservation.

Alternatives do exist, including true renewables like solar, wind and geothermal energy that are significantly less destructive sources of energy. Rather than investing in short-term and short-sighted solutions, we should be increasing these types of energy investments.

Hear our SOS message. Take action now. Consider these alternatives and stop incentivizing the use of trees for fuel in your renewable energy policies. The future of our forests, climate and health depends on it.

Sincerely,

See Attached Names





Mr. Karmenu Vella
Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Brussels, 11 December 2014

Dear Commissioner Vella,

BirdLife Europe and the European Environmental Bureau endorse and want to bring to your attention an **appeal by five conservation organizations from the United States and by more than 50 000 individual US citizens for a change in the EU's policies on bioenergy** and to stop incentivizing cutting of Southern US forests for energy use.

As a result of the EU's efforts to increase the use of renewable energy, the use of bioenergy and particularly of wood is rapidly increasing. The growing demand is driving the expansion of wood pellet manufacturing and exporting in the South East US, resulting in more than 30 new pellet mills currently proposed just to feed European power stations.

Citizens of US states such as North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia and Florida feel how the production of these wood pellets from their forests negatively affects their health, the environment, climate and their quality of life. Tens of thousands of people therefore joined the call on a National Day of Action, held 13 November, to send a message to you with the call 'Save Our Southern Forests!' These people witness firsthand the impacts of the EU's renewable energy policies in their local forests, and see that there is no adequate legal framework in place to protect even the most biodiversity-rich kinds of forests or to limit the use of wood for energy only to forest residues.

BirdLife Europe and the European Environmental Bureau support the ambition of President Juncker for the EU to become 'world number one in renewable energies' but insists that this can and must be done by increasing the share of renewable energy needs in a sound and sustainable way, without adverse environmental impacts.

This requires that effective safeguards for the use of bioenergy are put in place as part of the 2030 climate and energy policy framework. Safeguards are needed to ensure that the bioenergy accounted towards the EU's renewable energy target really delivers greenhouse gas savings, and does not just transfer emissions from the energy sector to the forest and land sectors. Safeguards are also needed to limit the use of biomass to match sustainable availability of biobased resources in the EU and to minimize negative environmental impacts.

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Jeremy Wates
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