

[About](#)[Action](#)[Docs](#)[News](#)[Videos](#)[Research](#)[Support](#)[Contact](#)

Research on Subsidies for Logging & Burning of Woody Biomass



By including bioenergy in renewable energy targets, the EU is promoting direct and indirect subsidies for it, claiming that it is a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels.

Every year billions of euro's in renewable energy subsidies paid out of a surcharge on our electricity bills – went to power stations burning wood. This is money which should go to genuinely low-carbon renewables such as wind, wave and solar power. Altogether, far more wood is being burned for electricity than is produced annually in Europe.

Far from being green energy, biomass burning makes climate change worse, destroys forests and damages biodiversity. It also harms communities who live near wood pellet plants and biomass power stations and wastes bill-payers' money on a false solution to our energy needs.

Warning for quick fix that does not lead to the solution
[2019-09-03-mob-milieuorganisaties-voorzien-nieuwe-juridische-stikstofprocedures-waarschuwing-voor-quick-fix-die-niet-tot-de-oplossing-leidt-dutch.pdf](#)

This document written by Johan Vollenbroek from the Mobilisation for the Environment organisation warns against another quick fix and states

RECENT

[2019-08-14-tpfc-misguided-strategy-burning-wood-to-mitigate-climate-change-in-germany-english.pdf](#)

2019-08 \\ TPFC

[2019-09-03-mob-milieuorganisaties-voorzien-nieuwe-juridische-stikstofprocedures-waarschuwing-voor-quick-fix-die-niet-tot-de-oplossing-leidt-dutch.pdf](#)

2019-09 \\ MOB

[2019-08-00-eu-biomass-legal-case-main-arguments-english.pdf](#)

2019-08 \\ EUBiomassLegalCase

[2019-07-08-epn-report-threat-map-are-forests-the-new-coal-english.pdf](#)

2019-07 \\ EPN

[2019-06-23-wageningen-university-research-duurzame-biomassa-voor-de-productie-van-waterstof-dutch.pdf](#)

2019-06 \\ WUR

biomass power plants should be shut down immediately.

"...Subsidies for biomass plants and wood-fired power plants must be ended immediately. As a result, profits disappear which puts a brake on unwanted expansions which saves a substantial amount of nitrogen emissions..."

READ MORE

Misguided Strategy Burning Wood Against Climate Change [2019-08-14-tpfc-misguided-strategy-burning-wood-to-mitigate-climate-change-in-germany-english.pdf](#)

This report commissioned by multiple organizations like TPFC, WWF, ARA and DenkHausBremen clearly states the reasons why burning woody biomass to mitigate climate change is a misguided strategy.

"...Wood contains less energy than coal, oil or gas. Thus, more of it has to be burned to produce the same amount of energy. According to calculations by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, heating with wood releases almost twice as much carbon dioxide (CO₂) as using gas..."

"...The European Union has recently updated its Renewable Energy Directive (RED II). Among other things, it aims to increase the share of renewables to 32% by 2030. This is an ambitious target, as the current European average is only 17%. This will further increase wood consumption in the future. One reason is the EU's decision to consider the burning of wood as climate neutral. This decision made it possible for the Member States to subsidise the use of woody biomass as a measure to mitigate climate change..."

"...countries like Denmark, Belgium or the Netherlands, the number of wood biomass power plants is on the rise. In the coming years, European demand for pellets alone will increase by a further six million tonnes. The European Union is one of the most important perpetrators of this misguided development, as it recognises wood burning for electricity production as a climate change mitigation measure. This has made Europe to the most important destination for the international pellet trade..."

"...the EU has decided to increase the share of renewable energy to 32% by 2030 – and most of it currently comes from woody biomass..."

READ MORE

[2019-06-17-nrdc-dogwoodalliance-southern-environmental-law-center-global-markets-for-biomass-energy-are-devastating-us-forests-english.pdf](#)

2019-06 \ \ Multiple NGO's

[2019-06-03-tweede-kamer-hoorzitting-bomen-kappen-voor-klimaat-en-natuur-roofbouw-of-noodzakelijk-kwaad-dutch.pdf](#)

2019-06 \ \ GOV NL

[2018-12-17-european-environment-agency-report-renewable-energy-in-europe-english.pdf](#)

2018-12 \ \ EEA

ATTENTION!

We are analyzing reports and creating & posting new summaries every day. This is time consuming work but we will try to deliver multiple summaries per day. We are currently processing reports from 2019 and will work our way back into the [hundreds of official research reports commissioned the last decade.](#)

EU Biomass Legal Case Main Arguments

[2019-08-00-eu-biomass-legal-case-main-arguments-english.pdf](#)

This legal document contains the main arguments in the EU Biomass Legal Case where the applicants seek annulment of the inclusion of "forest biomass" – essentially trees, including, stems, stumps, branches and bark – as a renewable fuel within the Renewable Energy Directive (recast) 2018.

"...The use of forest bioenergy can also perpetuate harms to other systems. Co-firing biomass with coal allows coal plants to continue operating and even collecting renewable energy subsidies, perpetuating harms to human health and the climate from burning coal. The statement of Tony Lowes in support of this application describes co-firing biomass in peat-burning plants in Ireland, thereby perpetuating the destructive practice of stripping peat for fuel. The Directive does not recognize peat as biomass, but support for woody biomass co-fired with peat ensures the peat-burning plants continue to operate..."

READ MORE

Threat Map Are Forests the New Coal

[2019-07-08-epn-report-threat-map-are-forests-the-new-coal-english.pdf](#)

This report was commissioned by the EPN as a wake-up call to those governments that are subsidising coal to biomass conversions; will persuade investors that financing biomass power is not sustainable; and will persuade energy analysts, retailers and consumers to distinguish forest biomass, as a high-carbon renewable energy technology, from lower-emitting technologies like wind and solar.

"...Key Findings;

- 1. Global supply of and demand for forest biomass is predicted to increase more than 250 % over the next decade, having already doubled in the last ten years.*
- 2. Biomass energy, predominantly forest biomass, dominates 'renewable' energy production, dwarfing wind and solar and undermining their prospects by diverting subsidies that should be applied to such genuinely low emissions technologies.*
- 3. Countries in Asia are making the same mistakes that European countries made in encouraging large scale biomass burning for energy production. Japan and South Korea are now heading down the same wrong road that faulty European Union policies enabled, namely subsidising power generation from forest biomass and failing to count smokestack carbon*

emissions resulting from wood burning.

4. *The majority of feedstock for the increasing pellet market will be supplied directly from forests, inevitably entrenching and expanding logging at higher rates over greater areas. This is in stark contrast to findings in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report regarding the urgency of protecting and expanding forests in the near term as critical for avoiding the worst impacts of climate change.*
5. *Growth in the industry is likely to occur by expanding supply from tropical, temperate and boreal forests in developing and developed countries, thereby posing an escalating global threat to natural forest ecosystems including those that are mega-diverse or carbon rich..."*

READ MORE

Sustainable Biomass for Production of Hydrogen

[2019-06-23-wageningen-university-research-duurzame-biomassa-voor-de-productie-van-waterstof-dutch.pdf](#)

This report was commissioned by the Dutch Government and was intended for the green sector (forest, nature and urbangreen managers) and the policymakers as they need a scientific evidence- based underpinning of the use of biomass (branch and top timber) as a sustainable raw material for bio-energy production and discusses that investments made in the burning of biomass will delay the transformation of higher quality application solutions.

"...Bioenergy plays a role in the energy transition. Whether that is a temporary or a permanent role is difficult predictable, but the higher quality applications (as a green raw material) in other sectors, such as in chemistry, are slowly increasing. Long-term support measures for bioenergy such as subsidies can delay this transformation..."

READ MORE

Global Markets for Biomass Energy are Devastating Forests

[2019-06-17-nrdc-dogwoodalliance-southern-environmental-law-center-global-markets-for-biomass-energy-are-devastating-us-forests-english.pdf](#)

This report commissioned by NRDC, Dogwood Alliance, Southern Environmental Law Center exposes the damaging logging practices used to source the biomass industry, including the clearcutting of iconic wetland forests.

"...Countries looking to meet their commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement and phase out coal must stop wasting scarce public resources subsidizing dirty and destructive biomass energy. Instead, policymakers in the United Kingdom, other European Union member states, and emerging markets for bioenergy around the world should redirect investments to genuinely zero-carbon energy sources like energy efficiency, solar and wind..."

READ MORE

Dutch Government Answers to Burning Wood Questions [2019-06-07-minez-minister-wiebes-beantwoording-vragen-over-milieuschade-houtstook-is-vele-malen-hoger-milieuschade-door-aardgas-of-stookolie-dutch.pdf](#)

This document contains the answers from the Dutch government concerning questions about the damage to the environment caused by burning wood.

*"... PvdD party question for the Dutch government:
Do you share the view that it is no longer justified that the government subsidizes and promotes pellet stoves and biomass boilers as renewable energy sources?
If not, why not?..."*

*"...Dutch government answer:
As part of the ISDE evaluation, the government will critically examine the desirability of further stimulation of small-scale biomass combustion..."*

READ MORE

Dutch Government Hearing Logging Trees for the Climate [2019-06-03-tweede-kamer-hoorzitting-bomen-kappen-voor-klimaat-en-natuur-roofbouw-of-noodzakelijk-kwaad-dutch.pdf](#)

This report commissioned by main parties like the Dutch State Forest Management and its former Director, Professors at the University and others concerned with the massive amount of trees being logged for biomass production.

*"...Input Dutch forest management and nature conservation
Disadvantages of clear-cut exploitation:*

1. build-up of long-term financial debt;
2. loss of the next-generation forest already established spontaneously;
3. reduction of climate robustness;
4. loss of biodiversity;
5. reduction in the amount of bound CO₂;
6. loss of soil fertility;
7. loss of forest aesthetics..."

"...Advice:

- stop subsidy for exploitation that destroys the forest ecosystem and leads to losses;
- stop unnecessary mobilization of CO₂ and mineral loss due to soil tillage;
- stop subsidies for biomass that should remain in the forest ecosystem..."

READ MORE

Renewable Energy in Europe

[2018-12-17-european-environment-agency-report-renewable-energy-in-europe-english.pdf](#)

This report is commissioned by the European Environment Agency and states the result of subsidies being diverted from real sustainable solutions like wind and solar to the burning of biomass.

"...the annual pace of growth in the EU has stagnated or decreased for most renewable electricity (RES-E) technologies and for renewable heating (RES-H) from solar thermal and heat pumps. It has continued to increase for only a few other renewable energy technologies (i.e. geothermal and solid biomass-based technologies)..."

"...the current average pace of renewable energy deployment across Europe would not enable the EU to achieve the new RES target, of 32 % by 2030. Meeting the more ambitious EU-level RES (and climate mitigation targets) for 2030 and 2050 calls for steeper deployment rates of RES across all sectors and especially in heating and cooling, and in transport (EEA, 2018b)..."

READ MORE

ACTION	INFO	RESEARCH	CONTACT
Petitions	About	Biodiversity	Email
E-mail campaigns	Action	Carbon Dioxide	Facebook
Legal Cases	Documents	Certification	Youtube
Donate	News Items	Ecotoxicity	Twitter
Become our Patreon	Videos	Health Risks	Linkedin
How can we support you?	Research	Legal	Patreon
Support Us	Support	Solutions	Google
Join Us	Our Team	Subsidies	EDSP ECO
Support our Partners	Legal	Sustainability	Our Headquarters
Our other Projects	Statutes	Whole Trees	All Associates