



Arise for Social Justice
467 State St.
P.O. Box 5423
Springfield, MA 01101

(413) 734-4948, Fax: 413 734-4030

Ariseforsocialjustice@gmail.com

Good Morning,

My name is Michaelann Bewsee and I'm the director of Arise for social Justice, a low-income rights organization which addresses income, housing, homelessness and public health. I have lived in my home city, Springfield, for six of my seven decades, and I've spent much of this past decade opposing the construction of a biomass plant in Springfield. What I learned in that decade has led my organization to understand the links between public health, climate change, and the burning of fossil fuels for energy.

I recognize that the regulations under consideration are not directly relevant to the construction and operation of biomass incinerators that produce energy for electricity. But I do believe that these regulations are a foot in the door for the biomass industry, which, in Springfield, Greenfield and Russell, has shown its willingness to cherry-pick science for the sake of profit.

You'll hear much excellent testimony this morning in opposition to including biomass in these regulations, so I'll try not to be repetitive. But there are a few points I would like to make.

First, our Commonwealth's residents who will be most affected by the burning of wood are not the voices that you will be most likely to hear in comments on these regulations.. But I want to tell you that the regular onslaught of pollution our communities face is substantial, even if not at the top of the priority list for those struggling just to survive. You must take those voices into account.

Second, these proposed regulations would require that chippers, pellet producers, and other companies that provide fuel for biomass facilities use "sustainable forestry practices." But as in Springfield and elsewhere, the equipment used to log trees, convert them to wood pellets and transport them—on a continuing basis—as part of CO2 pollution is not calculated in their impact.

Biomass is supposed to become carbon-neutral in twenty years. Even if that projection were accurate—and many of us are skeptical of that calculation—we do not have twenty years to mitigate the effects of climate change. In fact, we have no time at all, as pollution and the effects of climate change already impact our communities in myriad ways. Just ask the elderly person without air conditioning, or the families with children suffering from asthma, what they think about *any* increase in air pollution.

Finally, if there's anything I've learned in the past ten years is that burning *anything* for heat or electricity is a step in the wrong direction. We will not meet the requirements of the Global Warming Solutions Act unless we eliminate sources of pollution, preserve our forests and actively promote and fund alternative sources of energy which do not require combustion. We have no time to waste.