

TESTIMONY BEFORE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES HEARING
HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
AUGUST 7, 2017

GOOD MORNING, MY NAME IS MICHELE MARANTZ, AND I'M A RESIDENT OF LONGMEADOW. I'D LIKE TO BEGIN BY THANKING THE MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES FOR HOLDING THIS HEARING IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS ON A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT SUBJECT.

I'M HERE TODAY TO SPEAK AGAINST GRANTING CLEAN ENERGY SUBSIDIES TO WOOD FUEL INDUSTRIES. THIS IS A BAD IDEA FOR MANY REASONS, BUT I'LL LIMIT MY TESTIMONY TO THREE OF THEM: WOOD FUELS' NEGATIVE IMPACT ON CLIMATE CHANGE, ECONOMICS, AND HEALTH.

WITH RESPECT TO CLIMATE CHANGE, BY NOW WE ALL KNOW THE NEGATIVE IMPACT THAT CARBON EMISSIONS HAVE IN PRODUCING HEAT IN THE ATMOSPHERE. WE ALSO KNOW THAT THE EARTH IS WARMING AT AN ALARMING RATE AND THAT INTACT FORESTS FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE BY SEQUESTERING CARBON. GIVEN THAT SCIENTISTS HAVE PREDICTED A TIPPING POINT IN OUR NEAR FUTURE WHEN WE WILL ACTUALLY BE UNABLE TO REVERSE THIS DESTRUCTIVE WARMING TREND, WHY WOULD YOUR COMMITTEE CONSIDER GRANTING CLEAN ENERGY SUBSIDIES TO AN INDUSTRY WHOSE PRODUCT INVOLVES THE DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS AND INJECTS MORE CARBON AND OTHER GREENHOUSE GASES IN THE AIR THAN COAL, PER MEGAWATT HOUR OF ENERGY?(PFPI.net, "Trees, Trash, & Toxics, pp. 16-17)

RECENT STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT THE MERE ACT OF HEAVY CUTTING CAN LEAD TO SOIL CARBON LOSSES IN FORESTS THAT CAN LAST FOR DECADES. HEAVY CUTTING ADVOCATES ARGUE THAT TREES ARE RENEWABLE RESOURCES, BUT SCIENTISTS HAVE COUNTERED THAT IT TAKES DECADES TO GROW A MATURE TREE. HEAVY CUTTING ON SHORT ROTATIONS WILL RESULT IN A FOREST THAT WON'T RECOVER ITS ORIGINAL CARBON STORAGE ABILITY EVEN AFTER A CENTURY. (Portland Press Herald, "Maine Voices" Is biomass energy carbon neutral? Not when you look at the facts." January 13, 2017)

AS IT STANDS NOW, OUR STATE ALREADY DOES NOT PROTECT FORESTS FROM DEFORESTATION AND IGNORES DESTRUCTIVE LOGGING PRACTICES. PLEASE DON'T EXACERBATE THIS BAD SITUATION BY PROVIDING A SUBSIDY THAT WILL INCREASE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CARBON SINK THAT FORESTS PROVIDE, SPURRING TOXIC AIR POLLUTION AND PROMOTING CLIMATE CHANGE.

THIS LEADS ME TO MY SECOND POINT: ECONOMICS. WITH RESPECT TO THE PROPOSED SUBSIDY, WHY SHOULD WE AS TAXPAYERS SUBSIDIZE DEFORESTATION AND INCREASED AIR POLLUTION, PARTICULARLY SINCE A RECENT POLL REVEALED THAT OVER 70% OF MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS WANT THEIR ENERGY TO COME FROM RENEWABLE RESOURCES? IF THE MAJORITY OF MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS WANT CLEAN ENERGY, SHOULDN'T THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES SUBSIDIZE THE CLEAN TECH COMPANIES THAT ARE SPRINGING UP ALL OVER THE STATE?

ON ANOTHER ECONOMIC NOTE, WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS HAS A WELL-ESTABLISHED TOURIST INDUSTRY THAT ANNUALLY DRAWS MILLIONS OF VISITORS TO THIS PART OF THE STATE. HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE NEGATIVE IMPACT THAT LOGGING EXPANSION WILL HAVE ON OUR STATE FORESTS, THE BEAUTY OF OUR RURAL AREAS, AND OUR ROADS? AS A LAST ECONOMIC POINT, PLEASE NOTE WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WOOD-BURNING INDUSTRY IN MAINE. FOR THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, POWER PLANTS IN MAINE RECEIVED \$2.6 BILLION DOLLARS IN RATEPAYER SUBSIDIES. DESPITE THAT INFLUX OF TAXPAYER MONEY, THE PLANTS SHUT DOWN ANYWAY. WHEN THE LEGISLATURE VOTED ADDITIONAL SUBSIDIES TO PREVENT FURTHER SHUTDOWNS, OVER \$20 MILLION IN HIGHER ELECTRICITY COSTS WAS PREDICTED FOR RATEPAYERS. (Portland Press Herald, "Maine Voices Is biomass energy carbon neutral? Not when you look at the facts." January 13, 2017) LET'S NOT HAVE MASSACHUSETTS FOLLOW THIS EXAMPLE BY SUBSIDIZING AN ECONOMICALLY INEFFICIENT MEANS OF PROVIDING ENERGY.

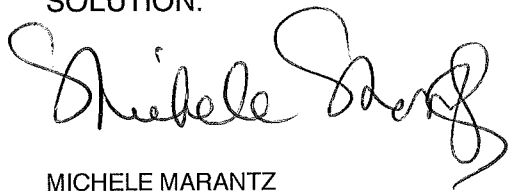
MY FINAL POINT ADDRESSES THE NEGATIVE HEALTH IMPACT OF ANY WOOD-BURNING FACILITY, BE IT A POWER PLANT, SCHOOL FURNACES, OR HOME STOVES. A STUDY BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION CONCLUDED THAT WOOD FUEL ENERGY IS, IN FACT, CARCINOGENIC BECAUSE OF PARTICULATE AND TOXIC GAS EMISSIONS. REINFORCING THESE FINDINGS, A HARVARD HEALTH STUDY RELEASED LAST MAY CONCLUDED THAT THERE IS NO SAFE AMOUNT OF PARTICULATES WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR IMPACT ON OUR HEALTH. THE AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION HAS ALSO WRITTEN THAT, THOUGH EVERYONE IS AT RISK FROM PARTICLE POLLUTION, THE YOUTH, ELDERLY, AND THOSE WITH PRE-EXISTING RESPIRATORY DISEASES LIKE ASTHMA AND CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE ARE AT GREATER RISK. (Letter from the American Lung Association to the Mahar Regional School District, March 2, 2016)

LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT THIS MEANS ON A LOCAL LEVEL. DID YOU KNOW THAT THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL HAVE IDENTIFIED MASSACHUSETTS AS HAVING HIGHER

ASTHMA RATES THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE? (Letter from the American Lung Association to the Mahar Regional School District, March 2, 2016) AND WHEN IT COMES TO THE SPRINGFIELD AREA, SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL CHILDREN SUFFER TWICE THE NATIONAL RATE OF ASTHMA. (Letter from the American Lung Association to the Mahar Regional School District, March 2, 2016) AS A RETIRED SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER, I CAN ATTEST TO THE WIDESPREAD USE OF INHALERS AMONG THE CHILDREN I TAUGHT. WITH SPRINGFIELD'S AIR QUALITY RATED AS F, IT'S NO WONDER THAT THE ASTHMA RATE IS SO HIGH—AND WHAT HAPPENS IN SPRINGFIELD DOESN'T STAY IN SPRINGFIELD, AS ASTHMA RATES ARE ALSO HIGH IN SPRINGFIELD'S SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES.

AND THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD IS NOT AN ANOMALY WHEN IT COMES TO AIR POLLUTION. THE 2017 HARVARD HEALTH STUDY NOTED THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF CARBON ON THE HEALTH OF BOSTON AREA RESIDENTS, AND IN A RECENT NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF AIR POLLUTION, THE NEW YORK CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT NOTED THAT PARTICULATES IN THE AIR CAUSE MORE THAN 2,000 PREMATURE DEATHS AND 6,000 EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS AND HOSPITALIZATIONS EACH YEAR—HEALTH CARE COSTS DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO CARBON AND OTHER GREENHOUSE GASES. DO WE REALLY NEED TO ADD TO THESE AWFUL FINDINGS BY PROMOTING DAMAGING PARTICULATE PRODUCTION FROM WOOD FUEL SOURCES?

IN CLOSING, I'D LIKE TO REITERATE THAT THERE IS NO ECOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC, OR HEALTH BENEFIT THAT JUSTIFIES THE CITIZENS OF MASSACHUSETTS SUBSIDIZING THE WOOD FUEL INDUSTRY. WITH THE CLEAN ENERGY OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO CONSUMERS, PLEASE DO NOT INSULT OUR INTELLIGENCE BY TRYING TO IMPOSE ON US A POLLUTION-PRODUCING AND HEALTH-DESTROYING TECHNOLOGY MASQUERADING AS A CLEAN ENERGY SOLUTION.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michele Marantz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

MICHELE MARANTZ
117 RUGBY ROAD
LONGMEADOW, MASSACHUSETTS 01106