

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, MA, 02133



MICHAEL J. FINN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
6TH HAMPDEN DISTRICT

House Chair
Global Warming and Climate Change

Room 274, STATE HOUSE
TEL: (617) 722 - 2676

June 7th, 2019

To John Wassam,

I am writing to you today to respectfully oppose the administration's proposed amendments to 225 CMR 14 and 15 regarding the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and subsidizing biomass power plants. The Global Warming Solutions Act and Green Communities Acts put forth benchmarks for Massachusetts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy technologies, and rolling back regulations and subsidizing biomass power plants is a step backwards on the progress we have made over recent years to reduce the Commonwealth's carbon footprint.

Massachusetts needs to look at investments and innovative opportunities to utilize real renewable energy sources, not wood burning facilities that operate at a low efficiency rating and pollute the air we breathe. Relying on biomass for renewable energy makes it even more difficult to achieve our ambitious goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050 due to the emissions these plants produce. Studies have found that wood heating is more polluting than fossil fuels and account for a quarter of the fine particle pollution emissions in Massachusetts. It also weakens the integrity of our RPS by allowing for biomass to contribute to our renewable goals when the scientific community at large has great concern about the negative effects of biomass production. Instead of spending millions on subsidizing these biomass facilities, we should look to invest in programs to help subsidize cleaner and more sustainable renewable energy programs like the RPS Solar Carve Out Program that helped spark solar installation across the entire state.

In 2012, Governor Deval Patrick placed restrictions on biomass plants after scientific evidence found that these plants could increase air pollution. Springfield's air quality is already poor from numerous factors, and has one of the highest asthma rates per capita in the entire country. Adding what will become the largest wood burning facility in the Commonwealth to a city that is challenged by poor air conditions would place an unnecessary burden and health risks on those in the community.

Thank you for the time and consideration to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or would like to talk about this issue further.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Finn", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael J. Finn
State Representative
6th Hampden District