

Testimony to DOER about RPS and APS changes:

Climate science reveals that we must reduce emissions and take CO₂ that's already in the atmosphere out to avoid catastrophic warming, – most easily and with low cost, by restoring and expanding forests. We need to cut our net emissions in half in the next ten years, and reach emissions neutrality – with emissions balanced by uptake –hopefully by 2030 and definitely by 2050.).

As a result, burning forest wood for energy is counterproductive. Wood is technically renewable, but wood-burning power plants emit more CO₂ per unit energy than fossil-fired plants, pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere just when we need most to reduce emissions. Forests cut for fuel may grow back eventually to offset those emissions, but this takes decades to centuries for trees to reach the sizes that would allow for maximum carbon sequestration. The result is a net increase in CO₂ emissions to the atmosphere just when it's most important to reduce emissions.

This was the big finding of the Manomet Report that was commissioned by Massachusetts to inform the state's biomass energy policy. The study concluded that net emissions from wood-burning power plants that burn a mixture of trees and forestry residues exceed emissions from a same-sized coal or gas plant for years to decades.

Our forests are living integrated ecosystems hosting an abundance of diverse life. Trees and plants communicate with each other keeping a rich soil and integrated root system where nutrients, minerals and many life forms are shared. Older trees sequester the most carbon in the wood, roots and soil. They transmit information and resources through their roots to younger trees to help them thrive and survive in adverse weather conditions, during insect infestations, disease and other threats. When left to grow and die naturally, forests remain strong and healthy, allowing a vast ecosystem to grow and prosper.

Our state forests belong to We the People and it is our responsibility to make sure that the governmental departments that work for us are following the best practices. The public needs to have a say. We love our forests and want them to be kept natural for eternity.

In Western Massachusetts we are also extremely concerned about the poor air quality in Springfield. There is an extremely high rate of asthma, one of the highest in our nation. We are extremely concerned about current plans to build the Palmer Biomass to begin operation. It is unacceptable for this to be allowed by our governmental agencies, without the approval of residents who will be affected by it. We expect DOER to act under the direction of and in conjunction with the citizens of this state.

We hope that DOER will respect the requests of the citizens of this state and do the right thing. Do not make the changes to RPS or APS which weaken the rules and allow for dirty energy to gain the funding and resources that are explicitly designated for the truly clean energies of wind, solar, geothermal, and small, local hydro.

Thank you for accepting and considering my testimony,

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