

John Wassam  
Department of Energy Resources  
Comments on RPS Regulations/Biomass Testimony

Dear Mr. Wassam and DOER of the Baker Administration,

I am a mother who is terribly concerned about the future of the planet, and I assume that you and I hold some of the same hopes for the future of the earth. I have lost a partner to cancer, and my daughter is one of the lights of my life. I find it's easy to make the leap to realize that all children mean that much to someone. I want to help preserve a livable planet for both us and for them.

Therefore I'm adding my voice to the discussion about changing the Renewal Portfolio Standard to allow for greater biomass burning. Isn't the point of a Renewable Portfolio Standard to provide energy sources that don't pollute and don't heat up our environment? Does biomass burning add to air pollution and to the heating of our environment? I say yes.

First, pollution: Burning wood will bring more particulate matter into the air. Bad air quality is already a terrible health problem for people living in the Pioneer Valley. Asthma rates in Springfield are the worst in our nation, and that's the site for one of the proposed biomass burning plants! Insane. But the same air travels north. My otherwise healthy, athletic child developed a form of asthma at the age of 12. I, who never had allergies, developed both allergies and asthma after living in the valley for 10 years. I say a resounding no to adding the burning of wood to the Renewable Portfolio Standard. And then I hear that wood which has been chemically treated would be allowed to be burned. . . And that there is a clause which allows trash to be burned? No. NO. NO!

Now, let's think about the heating up of the earth. Many mature, living trees are essential to help cool the earth, because they sequester some of the carbon that is heating our atmosphere.

Some may argue that wood is a renewable resource . . . but it takes a long time to grow a tree. Some trees may be harvested sustainably, but we'll probably need those trees for buildings and furniture, especially as other building materials may prove too carbon intensive to keep making. We don't have an unlimited number of trees. But we do have unlimited amounts of sun and wind. Biomass burning shouldn't be considered an equally clean fuel.

In 10 years, my daughter will be 30 years old. I hope that she will live in a world in which she will want to have a child. Scientists have warned us that we have a little more than 10 years to reduce our carbon emissions by 50%!! Do NOT slow us down *and withdraw the proposal to weaken* ~~with changes~~ in the Renewable Portfolio Standard to fund biomass fuel.

Thank you,  
Felicia Mednick  
137 State Street, Amherst, MA 01002  
with Mothers Out Front