

To: Mr. John Wassam and Dr. Michael Judge (DOER)

Re: Taking biomass out of RPS and opposing proposal to weaken regulations

Thank you for this opportunity to hear our comments. I live and work in Amherst, with people in chronic pain and illness and have seen the steady rise in chronic and autoimmune illness coinciding with the amount of environmental toxicity, from our increased chemicalized, industrialized, out of sync with nature, way of living.

My work compels me to approach problem solving holistically and that lens has informed my understanding that climate change is a symptom of our society's systemic illness. Therefore we need a holistic, well-informed approach to move towards a healthier society. Weakening the regulations around including biomass and waste in the renewable and alternative energy portfolio standards, is moving us in the opposite direction. Forests, the earth's carbon sequestration superheroes, and their ecosystems cannot be easily renewed.

So, why are we here again in this déjà vu of fighting for what we already know we must do? There's no time for anything less than putting our collective energy into moving forward. We expect you to be the DOER and do your job in helping to create that *"clean, affordable and resilient energy future for all residents, businesses, communities, and institutions"*.

With the increased rains now, trees are ever more essential to retain excess rainwater, prevent extreme run-offs and reduce flood damage. Without a healthy ecosystem which depends in large part on the lungs and liver of the earth, our forests, the planet gets sicker and we get sicker. What will any of the financial gains these weakened regulations are hoping for, matter then?

Whether we like it or not, the reality is we cannot continue to do business as usual, and yet we want to and must support our local businesses, the backbone of our communities. I don't accept that economic viability and environmental sustainability have to be at odds with each other. Massachusetts can do better to push our communities, our state, our country to cooperate and support all the players in a comprehensive plan to heal what humans have broken, out of ignorance and arrogance, and fundamentally fear that there isn't enough for all of us to feel taken care of. But there is, if we think differently. It will take tremendous courage, creativity and trust to make the changes necessary but if you're telling yourself the truth, there is no better choice, and the results will be better than anything we've done so far.

I'm asking you to be part of the better; on behalf of all concerned citizens, on behalf of those whose breathing is challenged due to air pollution that will only get worse if we don't change our course, those that are too sick to show up and protest and those yet to be affected, On behalf of business that need our support to thrive and serve, but in ways that don't harm the environment and on behalf of all those working so hard to address the climate crisis, like our group: Regenerative Farming, Forests, and Food Systems Alliance of Climate Action Now in Western Mass.

I expect you will receive more testimony detailing how this proposed RPS rewrite is a betrayal of climate science, forest protection, and the intent of the Massachusetts Global Warming Solutions Act. In tackling the crisis before us, we cannot let fear and self-deception get in our way, we cannot allow these weakened regulations, and Massachusetts must be the courageous forward thinking climate leader we purport to be, to create the future we need, for all of us.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter
Lenore Bryck, 255 Strong St Amherst, MA 01002