

## Wassam, John (ENE)

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**From:** Sarah McKee <smckee57@earthlink.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 12, 2021 10:22 AM  
**To:** DOER RPS (ENE)  
**Subject:** RPS Public Comment:BioMass is Filthy Energy

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John Wassam,

Dear Commissioner Woodcock,

I developed asthma as an adult. It was after moving to the Pioneer Valley and within breathing distance, apparently, of the Mt. Tom energy plant. Until shut down, it burned something like 12,000 tons of coal a day.

My medical bills and diminished quality of life were, of course, my own.

So I am deeply concerned by the proposed amendments to Massachusetts' Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) program pertaining to burning woody biomass.

First, I completely agree that biomass power plants should not be located in or near Environmental Justice communities. Please keep this amendment without change: "A Generation Unit using Eligible Biomass Woody Fuel or Manufactured Biomass Fuel that is either: (i) sited in an environmental justice population or (ii) sited within 5 miles of an environmental justice population, shall not qualify as an RPS Class I Renewable Generation Unit."

Actually, I oppose any biomass plant whatsoever. No one should breathe its toxic products.

If we're still to sup with the devil, however -- your plans to require new biomass power plants to meet a mere 60% efficiency requirement fall short.

Under the current RPS regulations, ALL biomass power plants must meet that requirement in order to qualify for renewable energy credits in Massachusetts.

Your proposal to eliminate efficiency requirements for existing biomass plants would allow dozens of highly polluting and inefficient biomass plants in Maine and across the Northeast to qualify for ratepayer subsidies if they claim to burn “non forest derived residues.”

This is simply insufficient. How would you ever enforce this?

I used to enforce the old Nixon oil price regulations. Many energy companies simply lie about what they're doing, and dare you to catch them. Then they lawyer up.

To do this here plays Russian roulette with our health.

Even if they can prove they are truly burning wood residues, rather than trees logged for fuel, these plants pump out large quantities of health-harming air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Not so smart, is it?

DOER's plan to use Massachusetts' ratepayer funds to prop up failing out-of-state biomass power plants will do nothing to mitigate climate change, reduce harmful air pollution, or promote new sources of clean, renewable energy.

This proposal is inconsistent with the state's recent acknowledgement of the health impacts from biomass power plant emissions and is a major step backwards for a state that has been a national leader on climate issues.

I urge you to leave the existing biomass eligibility criteria in the RPS intact, while adding the proposed provision to protect environmental justice communities.

Massachusetts residents' health and even lives depend on your doing the right thing.

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