

Finish the Job! Stop Subsidizing Biomass

Talking Points for June 28th TUE Hearings

About:

The Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy (TUE) Committee will hold two hearings on **Wednesday, June 28th** that will include our priority biomass bills. Last year, the State Legislature stood up to Governor Baker and took biomass power plants out of MA's renewable energy portfolio standard. It's time to finish the job and stop subsidizing burning wood for energy in Massachusetts' other clean energy programs!

Please sign up to testify and/or submit written comments in support of these bills:

- ❖ S.2136/H.3210 closes the loophole in the new greenhouse gas emissions standard for municipal lighting plants that counts biomass as “non-carbon emitting” energy
- ❖ S.2137/H.3211 ends subsidies for commercial-scale wood heating systems through Massachusetts' alternative portfolio standard.

How to Testify:

The hearings will be held on **Wednesday, June 28th at 10 am (House) and 1 pm (Senate)**. You can testify in person or virtually. This year, the House and Senate TUE Committee members are meeting separately. This means that we have to submit our testimony twice! There are two different sign-up forms to register to speak at the hearings, and two different email addresses to send in your written testimony. We highly recommend submitting written comments, even if it's the same as your spoken comments. Written comments are due Friday, June 30th at 5 pm. Visit <https://www.notoxicbiomass.org/> for more information.

Topline Ask & Message:

- My name is [NAME], and I live in [CITY]
- I urge the TUE Committee to issue a favorable report on
 - S2136/H3210, *An Act to remove woody biomass from the greenhouse gas emissions standard for municipal lighting plants* and
 - S2137/H3211, *An Act limiting the eligibility of woody biomass as an alternative energy supply*

Preparing Your Comment:

Keep in mind that you'll only have 3 minutes to make a comment (about 400 words total) so it may be easier to focus on just one of these bills. Below are talking points that you can use in your comments. To be most effective, please put them in your own words and weave in some of your personal story about why these bills are important to you or your organization.

Talking Points on S2136/H3210, *An Act to remove woody biomass from the greenhouse gas emissions standard for municipal lighting plants*

- This loophole for biomass was originally drafted to benefit the proposed Palmer biomass power plant in Springfield, which marketed its power to MLPs
- Allowing MLPs to treat biomass as a “non-carbon emitting source” is not only contrary to science, it also defeats the purpose of the law, which is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Biomass power plants emit more CO₂ per megawatt-hour than coal plants. Even assuming trees grow back, net CO₂ emissions from burning forest wood exceed emissions from fossil fuels for decades to over a century.
- Generating electricity with wood is hugely resource-intensive. A typical 50-MW power plant burns more than a ton of wood a minute, requiring more than an acre’s worth of wood per hour.
- Biomass power plants emit large quantities of fine particulates (PM_{2.5}) and other harmful air pollutants, and are disproportionately sited in low-income communities and communities of color, contributing to environmental injustice.
- Last year, the Legislature removed woody biomass from the list of eligible sources for Massachusetts’ Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) on the principle that it is a harmful, polluting energy source and should not be eligible for “clean” energy subsidies. Massachusetts should have a consistent policy regarding the treatment of woody biomass energy.

[See PFPI’s Factsheet on the MLP bill](#)

Talking Points on S2137/H3211, *An Act limiting the eligibility of woody biomass as an alternative energy supply*

- Wood-burning boilers and furnaces are highly polluting. According to the EPA, residential and commercial wood heating account for 83% of all fine particulate (PM 2.5) emissions from Massachusetts’ heating sector, and 22% of the state’s total PM 2.5 emissions.
- Numerous studies have linked PM 2.5 exposure to a wide range of acute and chronic health problems, including asthma, heart disease, cancer, birth defects, premature death, and increased risk of infections and mortality from Covid-19.
- The scientific evidence continues to mount regarding the harmful impacts of air pollution on people’s health, in particular on sensitive populations, such as children, the elderly, and people with respiratory ailments, and on environmental justice communities that are disproportionately burdened by pollution.
- Wood burning furnaces also emit more CO₂ emissions than either oil or natural gas furnaces. The best thing we can do for the climate is to minimize combustion and focus on energy efficiency and clean renewable energy.
- **Massachusetts should focus its clean energy subsidies on measures that actually reduce carbon emissions and protect public health.**

[See PFPI’s Factsheet on the APS bill](#)

For more information go to www.notoxicbiomass.org