

“Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed, that’s all who ever have.”
-Margaret Mead



OUR FORESTS. OUR STRENGTH.

Community Toolkit





OUR FORESTS AREN'T FUEL!

Build a movement to BAN INDUSTRIAL-SCALE WOOD PELLET PRODUCTION AND BURNING FOR ENERGY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Step 1: RAISE AWARENESS

Step 2: BUILD THE MOVEMENT

Step 3: PASS A RESOLUTION OR ORDINANCE

MATERIALS

Energy companies are moving quickly to cut our Southern forests and burn the trees as a fuel in electricity-generating power plants in Europe. The demand for wood pellets in Europe has resulted in the proliferation of manufacturing facilities across the South, with 23 wood pellet facilities currently operating and 29 proposed or under construction. The wood pellet industry is expanding rapidly, threatening the quality of life, health, economic prosperity and environment of residents in the Southern US.

Pass a resolution in your community to slow the spread of this destructive industry and to send a message to policymakers that our communities and our environment should be preserved and protected for future generations and need true renewable and economic solutions, not short-term industries that put profits before communities and the environment.

Whether you are living in a community with a proposed facility, want to safeguard your community from this potential threat or stand in solidarity with other communities, passing a resolution will send a clear message that this industry is not truly renewable or an economic solution.

FIND OUT IF THERE IS A WOOD PELLET FACILITY OPERATING OR PROPOSED NEAR YOU.

Step One: Raise Awareness and Build Support

Producing wood pellets to be burned as fuel, also known as biomass, is a fairly new industry, and local politicians and community members are not always aware of all the threats this industry poses. The first step to building a local anti-biomass movement and getting your elected officials to take you seriously is alerting your community of the potential threat of this industry.



EDUCATE YOURSELF

You don't need to be an expert on the biomass industry to organize your community, but it's important to know the basics and to familiarize yourself with the most common questions.

Read through the [Talking Points](#) and the [FAQ sheet](#), and work with a friend to practice answering the questions. Subscribe to [The Biomass Monitor](#) for regular updates and reports. Find out who the [big corporations](#) of the wood pellet industry are, and [see how your community is affected](#). Check out [this document](#) on ordinances to learn about why community engagement and action is so important.

HOST AN INFORMATIONAL SESSION

Secure a community space (church, university, library, park) to host your meeting, and advertise far and wide using flyers, newspaper ads, phone calls, email, social networks and personal invitations. Collaborate with other organizations, professors and community leaders who could partner with you and help promote the meeting.

Be respectful of people's time - keep your meeting to no more than two hours, and one hour might be best.



Suggested Meeting Agenda:

- * Introductions (Introduce yourself and why you care about the issue) (5 minutes)
- * Show the Wetlands up in Smoke video (10 minutes)
- * Biomass Powerpoint Presentation (Optional) (30 minutes)
- * Make it local (10 minutes)
- * Review any plans for wood pellet facility production in your community or the impacts of logging from a nearby industry.
- * Emphasize the need to preemptively stop this industry before it becomes an issue in your community.
- * Remember that finding a clean energy solution is a global problem, and all of us suffer from the effects of dirty energy on our health, climate and communities.
- * Community Questions and Discussion (30 minutes)

Venue Checklist:

- Confirm and double-check the availability of the location for your time and date.
- Ask about any paperwork you need to complete to reserve the space.
- Ask about any deposits or fees to reserve the space.
- Make sure the venue has tables, chairs and other materials you might need for the event.
- If you plan to show the video, make sure the venue has internet and AV hookup. Determine whether you need to bring your own computer, speakers, screen, and projector.
- Show up early to set up, and recruit a couple volunteers to help with cleanup after the event.

**If attendance is low in your first meeting, follow-up with those who did attend to build up for an even bigger informational session. Think about what recruiting tools worked well, and apply those to promoting your next event.

Materials:

[Fact Sheet](#)

[Wetlands up in Smoke video](#)

[Sign-in Sheet](#)

FOLLOW-UP

The people that attended your informational session have already shown support for the *Our Forests Aren't Fuel* movement. Follow up with them and ask them to take a next step, such as attending a planning meeting, recruiting one other person to join and collecting petition signatures. Giving people specific roles and tasks will give them a sense of ownership and encourage them to be more engaged with the movement.

Within days of your informational meeting, send out a follow-up email informing attendees of next steps they can take. Follow up individually with phone calls to each attendee.

BUILD A CORE GROUP

It just takes 5-10 people to start a movement in your community. Don't take on everything yourself. Organizing will be a lot more fun and effective when you share responsibilities.

Build a core group of 5-10 people who are committed to meeting regularly, doing outreach and passing an anti-biomass resolution in your community.



BUILD MEDIA PRESENCE

Getting your issue in the local paper is an important way to raise awareness. Op-eds and Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are some of the most widely read sections of the paper.

Host an LTE letter writing party. Have one person in your core group take leadership of the event. Find a date that works for most people in your core group, and have each person bring a friend or two.

Host the LTE party at a coffee shop, venue or someone's home.

Check your local paper's length requirements for LTE's.

Use the [LTE Toolkit](#) as a reference.

Have each attendee write one or two LTE's at the party.

The LTE party coordinator should create a submission calendar, and assign one or two people to submit an LTE each week. The coordinator should remind people of their assigned date.

Remember that newspapers receive many submissions and might not have the space to publish your LTE. The more you submit, the more the newspaper will recognize biomass as an important issue to your community and will be more likely to publish a letter.

Materials:

[LTE and Op-ed Toolkit](#)

ESTABLISH REGULAR MEETINGS

Now that you have a core group, it is important to keep them engaged and excited about building towards a resolution, ordinance, or moratorium. Depending on your group's needs and availability, you might meet weekly or every other week. These meetings can be focused on strategy sessions, LTE writing parties, phone bank sessions or coalition updates. Adding a fun or social component, like a potluck or meeting at a coffee shop, could help keep people excited about meetings.

CREATE A TIMELINE FOR SUCCESS

Building a movement and passing a resolution or ordinance takes time. Don't be discouraged when things don't happen overnight. Create a timeline that keeps things moving, but allows time for your group to successfully pass a resolution. Refer to our sample timeline to help create your own.

Materials:

[Sample Timeline](#)

"It's not the belief of the majority or the work of elected officials that will change the world. It will be action, most likely the actions of a minority, as it usually has been."

— Rebecca Solnit



Step Two: Build The Movement

Consider:

- What obstacles might you face that are specific to your community? How can you move past these?
- What influential members of your community would be willing to support the anti-biomass resolution?
- What locally elected officials have publicly expressed support for clean energy, forest protection, or community health? Which officials would be most likely to get behind the Our Forests Aren't Fuel resolution? Does anyone in the group have an existing relationship with anyone on the city/county council?
- Skills Assessment - What skills, experiences and resources does your coalition possess? Think about personal connections, media connections or experience, social media skills, church connections, law background, forestry knowledge, experience working on a similar movement, etc.
- For a more comprehensive document on power-mapping, [use this exercise on how to persuade public officials.](#)

End your meeting with a concrete next step that everyone can take part in, such as collecting petition signatures.

BUILD YOUR COMMUNITY BASE

Your community and local officials will be more likely to take you seriously if you can show broad support. You can demonstrate this support by collecting petition signatures. Work with your core group to develop a plan for collecting signatures. Set an ambitious but realistic goal for your group to achieve. Depending on the size of your community, this could be 100, 300 or 500 signatures. Remember that it's better to aim a little lower and have people achieve this than to aim too high and miss the mark. Think about the best way to achieve this goal.

Petitioning Checklist:

- Select a location. Petition at a local grocery store or co-op, a local festival, local environmental events, a neighborhood association meeting or go door-to-door. Make sure to get permission from the venue/host before petitioning.
- Petition online. Create an online version of your petition so that you can gather signatures through email and social media. Consider ipetition, or any other site that allows you to collect the contact information of sign-ons.
- Keep it simple. When petitioning, don't overwhelm people with all the facts. Go over the basics of the campaign. If people want more information, give them a fact sheet or direct them to the Dogwood Alliance website. Practice with a friend a few times, or use this sample petitioning script.
- Follow up. Be sure to collect people's contact information so you can call on them later to show up for a commissioners meeting or other event.
- Remember that petitions by themselves are not the most effective way to convince policymakers. They are great tools, however, for raising awareness and building support. Encourage people to leave a phone number and email so you can follow up with them about more effective ways to take action.

Materials:

[Petition](#)

[Sample Petitioning Script](#)

BUILD A DIVERSE COALITION

Your movement will be stronger with local businesses and organizations behind you, and your meetings with local policymakers will carry more weight when you are representing a coalition. With the support of your core team, reach out to local organizations that might sign on to the platform letter. Compile your petition signature numbers. Use this number in your outreach so businesses/organizations know you are representing a broad section of your community. Consider all possible partners. This industry affects people in different ways.

Brainstorm businesses, environmental organizations, faith organizations, student groups, restaurants, small business owners, outdoor stores and clubs, riverkeepers, hunting and fishing clubs, health organizations, realtors, social justice organizations and environmental justice groups. Reach out to already organized groups, such as a local union, PTA or NAACP chapter.



BUILD YOUR CASE

Think about what will be most likely to sway your elected officials. While it's best to keep the language broad for building your petition signatures and coalition, your commissioners may want to see more information and data. Check out [these](#) helpful reports and studies to build your case.

Materials:

[Platform Sign-on Letter](#)

[Reports and Studies](#)

Step Three: Pass A Resolution

Passing a resolution in your county/city will not happen overnight. It requires movement building in your community, relationship building and several meetings with local officials.

Don't get discouraged! Remember that this has been done before, and with an organized community and strong communication with your elected officials, your community can do it too!

BUILD ALLIES

Work with your core group to determine if there are any people within your group who already have relationship with local officials. Identify potential allies in the local officials, and work with them throughout the process. Set up individual meetings with them outside of regularly scheduled commissioner meetings. Remember that your local officials are very busy, so be respectful of their time. Be prepared with succinct updates on your campaign, and any asks that you have for them. Share information on the growth of your campaign and community support.

INTRODUCE YOUR RESOLUTION

Prepare a resolution for your commissioners to consider. Use the Sample Resolution to get started, but remember that there may be unique language and strategies to use in your county or city. Also, the language might change depending on whether your community is facing a facility, your county could be a future sourcing area or you want to support other communities who are facing a facility.

If you have a lawyer in your core group, have them review the resolution language to make sure it is appropriate. Present the resolution to commissioners that are friendly to your issue. Be sure to include the names of all the local organizations, businesses, and individuals who support the resolution.

Be prepared for commissioners to come back with new language and revisions. Work with your core group and commissioners to complete a draft that is acceptable to all parties.

Materials:

[Resolution against incineration passed in Valdosta, GA](#)

ATTEND COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

Find out when your local county commissioners meet. Even if it is just a few people, be sure to have a presence at meetings so that your commissioners get to know you, and know you are serious about the issue.

SUBMIT A PUBLIC COMMENT

Most county meetings offer a time to submit a public comment. These are usually at the end of the meeting, and you will have to sign up at the beginning of the meeting. Check with your local officials to clarify the process.

Call on your core group and petition and coalition sign-ons to show up for the public comment period. This will show commissioners how much public support there is for the resolution, and will encourage them to put it on the agenda.

If you get nervous speaking publicly, write down your comments, and practice in advance. Refer to the talking points to write your comments, and be sure to address all the reasons your community opposes this industry.

GET YOUR ISSUE ON THE AGENDA

Use your coalition and petition numbers to communicate the level of community support for your resolution. Work with your commissioners to determine whether or not the resolution has the necessary votes to pass. If there is not enough support for the resolution yet, keep working to build your base and make your case known to commissioners.

Once you know you have the votes for the resolution to pass, work with your commissioners to get it on the agenda for a vote.

If the issue is put on the agenda, call on your core group, petition signons and coalition sign-ons to attend the meeting. Organize a core group meeting to phone bank the people who signed your petition. The more people that come out for the meeting, the more your commissioners will know that this is an issue they should support.

If the resolution is put on the agenda, but you know you don't have the votes for it to pass, use it as an opportunity to get media attention. Recruit your base to come to the meeting to show support, and host a press conference.

Materials:

[Phone Script](#)

HOST A PRESS CONFERENCE

Even if your commissioners are friendly to your resolution and it's on the agenda, it's a good idea to host a press conference before the meeting. This will put additional pressure on your commissioners to pass the resolution.

Materials:

[How To- Press Conference](#)

[Talking Points](#)

NEXT STEPS

IF YOUR RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE PASSES:

Congratulations!!! Great work on building your movement and contributing to the protection of our forests and communities.

1. Send your resolution and success story to emily@dogwoodalliance.org so we can highlight your victory and share your story with other communities.
2. Celebrate your victory! You've done great work building a movement and a coalition. Call on these people to celebrate with you, and thank them for all their hard work and commitment to protecting our forests and communities.
3. Consider your next steps. If you passed a resolution, you could push for something more binding, like an ordinance. Perhaps you want to organize a lobbying trip to your state assembly to push for the ban of industrial-scale wood pellet production and burning on a state level. Or, you could do trainings with other communities to help them pass a resolution or ordinance. Your victory is a great success, but keep in mind that it doesn't mean your community and your forests are safe from all other threats.

IF YOUR RESOLUTION DOES NOT PASS:

Don't give up! This just means you need to do more organizing. Go back to step one and hold a meeting to consider next steps. You need to build a larger more powerful group to show more people support your resolution. Your county officials are elected by voters and are accountable to the people. You'll need to organize more to demonstrate that a majority of their constituents want to ban the industrial scale production and burning of wood pellets.

Thank you for being a part of the movement to protect our forests and our neighborhoods from the destructive impacts of the wood pellet industry! Visit our website for more information on the wood pellet industry at www.dogwoodalliance.org.

MATERIALS

- [FAQ's pg.12](#)
- [Timeline For Passing a Resolution pg.15](#)
- [Reports and Studies pg.16](#)
- [Draft Resolution or Ordinance pg.18](#)
- [Messaging and Talking Points pg.19](#)
- [How To - Press Conference pg. 20](#)
- [Our Forests Aren't Fuel \(OFAF\) Talking Points pg.22](#)
- [Petition For Community Toolkit pg.23](#)
- [Platform Sign-on Letter pg.24](#)
- [Resolution against incineration passed in Valdosta, GA](#)
- [Sample Script For Petitioning pg. 25](#)
- [Fact Sheet pg.26](#)
- [Events Sign-in Sheet pg.28](#)
- [Community Meeting Flier pg. 29](#)
- [Wood Pellet Manufacturing: Risks for the Economy of the US South](#)
- [VISIT THE DOGWOOD ALLIANCE ACT NOW PAGE](#)
- [dogwoodalliance.org/act-now](#)
- [COMPLETE Community Toolkit Checklist](#)



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is biomass?

A: Biomass is a broad term that refers to organic materials used as sources for energy. In most cases, this term refers to wood pellets, which are manufactured from whole trees, tops and limbs, and saw mill residues. Biomass can also be used to make ethanol that could be used in cars, or to produce heat and electricity.

Q: Our region needs jobs and development. Won't this industry be economically beneficial to our community?

A: No. Wood pellet facilities require a small number of highly skilled positions. These facilities often hire outside of the community to bring in the skills and experience needed.

In rural communities, the traditional timber industry has been a stable employer, with each job in the timber industry providing 2-3 additional jobs in the regional economy. The wood pellet industry, by contrast, provides only 1 additional job for each job in the wood pellet facility. A shift from traditional wood industries to the wood pellet industries would result in a decline in employment in the areas of the forest products sector that spawn the most jobs in the rest of the economy.

Furthermore, the industry is driven by subsidies and tax incentives that distort the true market value of this industry. European policymakers are heavily subsidizing wood pellets to meet renewable energy mandates. However, as governments begin to shift to other forms of renewable energy, like wind and solar, these subsidies for wood pellets will dry up, leaving our southern communities with useless infrastructure and stranded assets.

Q: Shouldn't private landowners be allowed to benefit from their land?

A: Research shows that trees from bottomland hardwood forests and forested wetlands represent a high value from an ecosystem services perspective (water, flood protection, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, etc) that positively support communities. While landowners do have a right to use their land as they see fit, it is important that they also consider the wide range of ways in which communities benefit from forest preservation.

Wood pellets and biomass represent the lowest value for landowners, providing only a few dollars per ton of wood. If a landowner chooses to manage his forests for wood products, he or she would get a much greater return on saw timber and at the same time having a lighter touch on the environment. A win-win for both the landowner and our forests.

Check out these [resources for landowners](#).

MATERIALS

Q: Aren't there regulations that protect forests?

A: In the Southern US, forestry on private land is conducted with little to no regulations whatsoever on many fundamental forestry practices. Privately held forests make up the vast majority of forested land in the Southern US, nearly 90%. Large-scale clearcutting is routine. There are no laws or regulations that protect old growth forests and endangered forests; conversion of natural forest ecosystems to plantations is permitted, as is in most cases logging of wetlands. Widespread use of toxic chemicals and fertilizers are permitted. There are no laws or regulations to protect species and their habitats aside from the federal Endangered Species Act, which provides emergency protections only once a species has become threatened or endangered with extinction and only if the species is known to occur in a specific tree and even with that you can log around that tree.

Most southern states lack regulations requiring notification before cutting, regeneration after cutting, and management planning. No southern state has requirements to limit the cumulative impact of logging operations and removals of forests exceed growth in several parts of the region. Most "Best Management Practices" are voluntary and not binding, and have been widely documented to allow damage to ecosystems.

Q: Doesn't the pellet industry rely almost exclusively on residues from existing logging operations?

A: Evidence demonstrates the opposite: biomass logging is occurring in natural forests, with high carbon stocks, expressly for the purposes of pellet production. Recent investigative reports by organizations like the Dogwood Alliance, NRDC and SELC along with media outlets including the *Wall Street Journal* and *BBC* have documented that Enviva, the largest exporter of wood pellets from the Southern US (and a supplier to both Drax Power in the UK and Dominion Resources in the US), is sourcing whole logs from clearcuts of mature wetland forests.

[Multiple independent investigations](#) have revealed the industry to be sourcing whole trees expressly for biomass, and in many cases from some of the most ecologically sensitive areas in the world. [This investigative flyer](#) documents Enviva sourcing whole trees and hardwoods in North Carolina.

Moreover, the projected growth in the Southern pellet industry cannot be sustained by using only residues that are secondary to logging operations for lumber or pulpwood. By 2012, the Southern US emerged as the world's largest exporter of wood pellets for biomass electricity generation, shipping over 1.75 million tons. By 2014 that number more than doubled to 4.4 million tons and is expected to reach almost 6 million tons by the close of 2015.

MATERIALS

Q: Isn't this industry better than coal?

A: In some cases, burning wood for fuel is actually worse than coal. Just like fossil fuels, when trees are burned in power plants, the carbon they have accumulated is released into the atmosphere. However, because freshly cut wood is nearly half water by weight, a lot of energy is required to boil off this water before useful energy can be produced. This makes biomass plants far less efficient than those burning fossil fuels. In other words, trees contain less potential energy per unit of carbon emissions than coal and other fossil fuels, so you need to burn many more trees to produce the same amount of energy. This results in [50 percent more carbon](#) emissions at the smokestack per unit of energy generated.

Second, cutting down trees for energy production disrupts vital carbon sinks and impedes ongoing forest carbon sequestration—not just on the forest floor, but deep down in the soil. From the perspective of the atmosphere, diminishing a carbon sink has the same impact as creating an equivalent-sized smokestack.

A recent study from the UK Department of Energy and Climate Change found that in many cases burning trees for electricity released more carbon in the atmosphere than burning coal. This finding has been backed up by various academic institutions in the US and Europe and most recently in a study conducted by NRDC. Multiple other studies, such as this one, have questioned the carbon benefits of wood pellets.

[MATERIALS](#)



TIMELINE FOR PASSING A RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE

Week 1: Educate Yourself

Week 2: Confirm time, date, and location for informational session. Promote your informational session.

Week 3: Host an Informational Session.

Week 3 - 4: Follow up with attendees from your informational session.

Week 4: Build your Core Group and Establish Regular Meetings.

Week 5: Host a Strategy Session.

Week 6 - 9: Collect petition signatures and coalition sign-ons. Get to know your local commissioners. Set up individual meetings and attend commissioner meetings. Draft your resolution.

Week 9 - 10: Continue to build relationships with your commissioners. Present your commissioners or council members with your resolution or ordinance.

Week 9 - 12: Build your presence at commissioner meetings by inviting and recruiting your base.

Week 12 - 17: Determine whether you have the votes to pass the resolution/ordinance. Decide whether it is time to put it on the agenda, or if you need more time. Build media presence at the commissioners meeting. Recruit your supporters to attend the meeting.

Week 18: Celebrate!

Or, regroup, reevaluate, and plan your next move. [Visit Next Steps if your Resolution/Ordinance Doesn't Pass.](#)

[MATERIALS](#)

REPORTS AND STUDIES

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

[Wood Pellet Manufacturing: Risks for the Economy of the US South](#)

[Estimating the Size and Impact of the Ecological Restoration Economy](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

[Enviva Ahoskie Investigation Flyer](#)

[Wetland Logging Investigation: Southampton, VA and Ahoskie, NC](#)

COMMUNITY IMPACTS

Wood Dust - [Residents are Having Concerns with Sawdust Particles](#)

[Injustice in Northampton](#) - Short Video

[Selling Out Sampson County](#) - Short Video

HEALTH IMPACTS

[Health Dangers of Fine Particulate Matter](#)

[American Lung Association Opposes Biomass](#)

PASSING A RESOLUTION OR ORDINANCE

[Stopping Polluters with Local Ordinances](#)

[Town Council Passes Biomass Moratorium](#) (Greenfield, MA)

[MATERIALS](#)



[NAACP Resolution Against Biomass](#) (Valdosta, GA)

MEDIA

[Wall Street Journal: Europe's Green-Fuel Search Turns to America's Forests](#)

[Washington Post: How' Europe's Climate Policies Led to More U.S. Trees Being Cut Down](#)

[Dogwood Alliance In the News: Biomass](#)

BIOMASS RESOURCES

[Energy Justice Network](#) Biomass Incineration

[The Biomass Monitor](#) (Monthly Publication)

[Biomass Magazine](#) (Industry Journal)

[Scientific Reports](#) (Energy Justice Network compilation of studies and reports)

LANDOWNER RESOURCES

[Healthy Forests Reserve Program](#)

[Forest Legacy Program](#)

[FSC Family Forests Program](#)

MATERIALS

DRAFT RESOLUTION OR ORDINANCE

A RESOLUTION TO BAN INDUSTRIALSCALE PRODUCTION AND BURNING OF WOOD PELLETS FOR ELECTRICITY

WHEREAS: (YOUR STATE) General Statutes provide, in Charter form, the rights of incorporated cities and municipalities to enact laws, codes and ordinances which enhance the quality of life and protect the citizenry and neighborhoods from situations which threaten the general health, welfare, aesthetics and wellbeing of the citizenry, and;

WHEREAS: The residents of (YOUR COUNTY) are aware of the wood pellet industry that is currently expanding across states in the Southeast, and are concerned about the potential impacts of this industry on the quality of life, economic prosperity, and environment of residents of (YOUR COUNTY).

WHEREAS: The activities surrounding production, including increased truck traffic, noise from the production process, and dust from the production, will disrupt the quality of life, public health, and safety of nearby residents.

WHEREAS: The wood dust and fine particulate matter that occurs in the production of wood pellets presents a serious health concern for nearby residents, and;

WHEREAS: The increased truck traffic from the facility will clog up roads, damage publicly funded roadways, and will pose a safety concern to local commuters, and;

WHEREAS: The wood pellet industry is a bad economic investment and a poor use of taxpayer dollars as the wood pellet industry is vulnerable to changes in EU carbon emission and sustainability requirements, and;

WHEREAS: The increased industrialization of rural landscapes could limit the attractiveness of the region as a location for new residents and businesses, threatening the economic vitality of our community, and;

WHEREAS: The destruction of forests for energy is detrimental to the critical services forests provide, such as carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, water purification, and storm surge protection, and;

WHEREAS: The use of wood pellets for fuel is not a carbon neutral form of renewable energy, and will contribute to the rate of climate change and deforestation.

THEREFORE: It is resolved that the signatories do hereby respectfully request that the governmental bodies which represent the citizens of CITY, COUNTY, STATE, act appropriately to secure the rights of and provide protection to the residents of the areas involved and ban the production of wood pellets for biomass energy within CITY, COUNTY limits.

Read, approved and adopted on this, the _____ day of _____, 2015.

MATERIALS

MESSAGING AND TALKING POINTS

1. The wood pellet industry is disrupting the quality of life, public health, and safety of residents living in communities across the South.

- a. The wood dust and fine particulate matter created in the production of wood pellets is leading to respiratory problems, creating a mess, and disrupting residents living near the facilities.
- b. The air and water quality of local communities is threatened by increased logging.
- c. The constant noise, at all hours, of the facility is disrupting the peace and sleep of residents of rural communities. The increased truck traffic from the facilities is clogging up the roads, damaging publicly funded roadways, and poses a serious safety concern to local commuters.

2. This industry is not the type of economic development that the South needs. We need high quality, high paying jobs that are here for the long haul.

- a. This is a shortlived industry that will harm communities then exit when policies and subsidies change in a few years, leaving Southern communities high and dry.
- b. The industry is being fueled by massive subsidies and incentives, all at the expense of local taxpayers, and gives little in return.
- c. The few jobs the industry provides come at the expense of the forests, air, and water of communities.
- d. We should be investing in highpaying manufacturing jobs and true renewable industries like wind and solar.

3. The wood pellet industry is harming our forests and our climate.

- a. The wood pellet industry is increasing logging in the South and accelerating the rate of the conversion of natural forests to pine plantations.
- b. Forests provide important benefits to local communities like clean water, clean air, protection from flooding, places to hunt and fish, and local tourism based industries and well as higher quality forest products.
- c. The southeast is home to a number of rare and endemic species. If Southern forests are destroyed, we lose all the plant and animal species that depend on these forests for habitat.
- d. Burning wood for fuel is actually worse than coal in some cases. In a misguided attempt to curb climate change, policy makers and industry executives are destroying the very trees that are supposed to protect us from climate change.

MATERIALS

HOW TO - PRESS CONFERENCE

Determine whether a news conference makes sense. Your goal is to generate media attention so, before planning the event decide how likely that is to happen. Factors to consider: Is there new information (public hearing or potential vote)? Is there conflict (us against a local company)? Is there a celebrity (Beyonce endorsing initiative)? Are there TV visuals (good size crowd, signs, etc)? Is there a local angle (pellet mill or biomass utility coming to your town or region)? If you cannot answer “Yes” to at least three of these questions, you probably should not be having a news conference a press release or a Letter to the Editor (LTE) might be more appropriate.

Logistics

Timing is critical to a successful event. Know the news deadlines in your city. In general, media events should take place between 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. Of course if there is a vote or action by your local government it needs to be time in conjunction with that. In addition, you need to consider what other newsworthy events will be happening that day and minimize the competition. For most locations, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and in some places, Saturdays, tend to be best. Picking a location is a critical decision. The number one criterion is accessibility to the media. Ideally, the location also provides good visuals (smokestacks) and/or is relevant (city hall for Mayor’s endorsement). Before using a location, check it out in person at the time/day of the planned press conference (the week before) to check for crowds, noise, parking availability, etc. Call and ask a reporter if s/he would come to that spot if it is a location out of the ordinary.

Speakers

It usually takes a few weeks to line up big name speakers. If possible, leave yourself at least two weeks preparation time. Anybody who agrees to speak at the conference needs to know in advance who the other speakers are, what each speaker is going to say, how long s/he has to speak, and what questions to expect. Ideally, a role play is conducted (including presentations and a question and answer session) the day before the event, giving each participant ample feedback. Each presentation should be short (25 minutes); each speaker should have at least one “quotable quote” or “soundbite”; and each speaker should be prepared to do her/his presentation without relying too heavily on reading notes. For outside speakers, draft notes to help them develop their presentations. Clarify with each speaker likely questions and who should expect to answer what.

Materials

Prepare and send a news advisory 2 days before the event. The advisory should briefly state the who, where, why, and when of the event. Your goal with the advisory is to tantalize the media with a few choice tidbits without giving away the whole story. Prepare a news release for distribution to members of the media who attend and to send to

outlets that don't attend after the event.

Visuals

Just as important as the materials explaining the event are the visuals at the event itself. Any news conference should have at least one TV shot in addition to a bunch of people in nice outfits talking. Examples of successful visuals are: blown-up pictures and graphics, samples of wood pellets, a blown-up copy of a petition, or a demonstration of safe and unsafe alternatives. For any event, be sure that there is a sign or banner with the cause clearly displayed and if there is an official local group name, have a banner for that as well. Have community participants wear buttons or t-shirts if possible.

Media turnout

Even the best planned event is a flop if no media show. The only way to ensure good attendance is to follow-up with reporters individually. Everyone who receives a news advisory should receive a personal phone call a couple of days ahead. Anybody who is mildly to very interested in the initial phone call should receive a reminder call the evening before and/or morning of the event. Call editors as well as reporters.

Make sure that you follow up with the wire services like the Associated Press [AP] (including the wire daybooks) and with the TV assignment editors. Call TV and AP (and other wire services) the afternoon before and the morning of the event. Reiterate the information in the advisory, but don't give away the story. Keep good records on whom you call and what they say so you know whom to expect.

At the event

A greeter should be stationed at the door with a sign-in sheet and a packet for media folks. You may want to serve coffee if it is an early morning event. No matter how many people have arrived, do not start the event more than five minutes after the scheduled time. Introduce yourself and the speakers and be sure to keep things moving along.

Leave up to 15 minutes for questions and answers. Feel free to wrap up sooner if things seem to be getting off track. After the event, stick around to do interviews with various media folks. Clean up the room. Drop off or email packets to media contacts who did not show. Head back to the office to do radio feeds/interviews, answer reporters' questions, and email out releases to key people who did not show.

Followup

Call through to the reporters who attended the event to answer any questions and find out if they will use the story. Call reporters who did not attend to interest them in the story and give interviews. Thank you notes with clips should go to all speakers. Record TV appearances, tape radio coverage and clip print stories. Keep records of media contacts with relevant info.

MATERIALS

OUR FORESTS AREN'T FUEL TALKING POINTS

- Dogwood Alliance is an environmental nonprofit that works to protect Southern forests.
- Our forests are not fuel and should not be destroyed and burned for electricity in Europe.
- Burning wood for electricity is worse for our climate than burning coal.
- Our forests store carbon, provide clean drinking water, protection from flooding, and critical wildlife habitat.
- The wood pellet industry led by Enviva and Drax needs to stop destroying our forests at the expense of local communities, wildlife habitat and our climate.
- The wood pellet export industry is bad for our communities and local economy as this is a short-term market and big companies are going to cut and run and leave our communities high and dry.
- Our region should not be investing in further forest destruction when we could be investing in true renewables like offshore wind and solar.
- Southern forests are being clearcut, trucked to facilities, put through an energy intensive production process, put on huge ships, and sent across the ocean to Europe where they are burned to produce electricity.
- Misguided energy policy has led us to a practice which cuts down the things that are supposed to protect us from climate change in order to protect us from climate change.

MATERIALS

PETITION FOR COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

Dear Elected Official,

We, the residents of (YOUR COUNTY OR CITY) County, are aware of the wood pellet industry that is currently expanding across states in the Southeast, and are concerned about the potential impacts of this industry on the quality of life, economic prosperity, and environment of local residents. The activities surrounding production, including increased deforestation, truck traffic, noise from the production process, and dust from the production, will disrupt the quality of life, public health, and safety of nearby residents. We call on you to pass a resolution to ban the industrial scale production of wood pellets, and the industrial scale burning of wood for electricity in (COUNTY OR CITY NAME).

*****BE SURE TO COLLECT THE NAME, CONTACT INFORMATION, AND ADDRESS OF EACH SIGN-ON. THIS WILL BE VERY IMPORTANT FOR FOLLOW UP AND FOR SHOWING YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS THAT THEIR CONSTITUENTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS ISSUE. REMEMBER THAT PETITIONS IN THEMSELVES ARE NOT ALWAYS EFFECTIVE TOOLS. IT IS THE FOLLOW-UP THAT IS IMPORTANT.**

[MATERIALS](#)

PLATFORM SIGN-ON FOR COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

Dear Elected Official,

We, the undersigned, are aware of the wood pellet industry that is currently expanding across states in the Southeast, and are concerned about the potential impacts of this industry on the quality of life, economic prosperity, and environment of local residents. The activities surrounding production, including increased truck traffic, noise from the production process, and dust from the production, will disrupt the quality of life, public health, and safety of nearby residents. We call on you to pass a resolution to ban the industrial scale production of wood pellets, and the industrial scale burning of wood for electricity in COUNTY OR CITY NAME.

Name	Address	Email	Phone
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MATERIALS

SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR PETITIONING

Hi, I'm part of a coalition in (YOUR CITY/COUNTY) that's working to protect our community and our forests from the wood pellet industry which, if located here, would lead to deforestation, noise and dust pollution and increased truck traffic. Do you have a minute to sign this petition calling on our county officials to pass a resolution to protect our health and quality of life from this industry?

If no...

Okay, thanks anyway!

If yes...

Great! Be sure to write clearly, and to provide your contact information so we can send you updates and developments on the resolution.

Alert them of any upcoming events or opportunities to take action. If they have many questions about the industry, give them a fact sheet and encourage them to learn more at www.dogwoodalliance.org.

MATERIALS

FACT SHEET



Burning Trees for Electricity Will Accelerate Climate Change and Destroy Southern Forests

Power companies in the United States and Europe are expanding their use of trees (woody biomass) as an energy source to replace fossil fuels. The wood is chipped or turned into pellets and burned in power plants just the same as coal. To meet this increasing demand, a new, rapidly growing industry of manufacturing facilities has emerged across the southeastern United States to supply wood fuel to electric utilities on both sides of the Atlantic. In the Southeast, the massive fuel needs of these energy companies could double logging rates and significantly increase carbon emissions, contributing to climate change at a time when we need to actively cut our carbon pollution. As important, local forest ecosystems and watersheds could be devastated.

OUR FORESTS AREN'T FUEL

Americans know how valuable our forests are, in the Southeast and across the country. In addition to providing one of the best tools to fight climate change, forests filter water, give us open spaces to hunt, fish, and camp and provide habitat to a multitude of species. If big power plants turn increasingly to whole trees for their fuel, it will intensify pressure to overharvest our forests, threatening our climate, wildlife, land and water. Large power companies and pellet manufacturers must commit to a wood-sourcing policy that excludes whole trees and move to true renewables.



Over the past year alone, wood pellet exports from southeastern ports increased 70%, making the Southern United States the largest exporter of wood pellets in the world. This growth is expected to continue: numerous additional manufacturing and export facilities are planned, particularly in the South.

MATERIALS

Burning Trees for Energy Increases Carbon Pollution for Decades

Power companies and pellet manufacturers promote biomass energy as a way to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change. They argue that if you cut down a tree and burn it, as long as you plant another in its place everything comes up carbon neutral. Until recently, energy from biomass was considered an important part of a robust portfolio of renewable energy sources—alongside technologies like solar, wind and geothermal—to address climate change. However, advances in science and accounting for pollution from different types of woody biomass have clarified that burning whole trees to produce electricity actually increases carbon emissions compared with fossil fuels for many decades.

Investments in Bioenergy Shift Focus Away from Low-Carbon Energy Solutions

We need utility companies to invest in expanding energy efficiency and clean, renewable and truly low-carbon energy sources, such as solar, wind and geothermal power. Investing in wood-burning power plants distracts from these efforts and erodes hard-won victories for forest conservation.



Southern pine plantations are a major source of biomass for wood pellet manufacturers. Unlike natural forests, which are home to a rich and diverse array of plants and animals, tree plantations provide little biodiversity. In the early 1950s there were approximately 2 million acres of planted pine in the South.

That figure has skyrocketed to more than 40 million acres of pine plantations today. According to the United States Forest Service, if current trends continue, pine plantations will likely increase by 60 percent—to 54 million acres by 2040—and make up more than one-quarter of all regional woodlands, an area the size of North Carolina and South Carolina combined.

Dogwood Alliance and Our Allies in North America and Europe Are Leading the Fight

In June 2013, Dogwood Alliance and NRDC launched the Our Forests Aren't Fuel campaign to shine a spotlight on the destructive impact faulty European climate policy is having on the forests, communities and climate of the Southern US. Joined by over 75 organizations across the South and an extensive network of ENGOs in Europe, we are working to convince policy-makers, investors, and large utilities to end the rush to burn and instead focus on investing in true renewable energy, like wind and solar.

Dogwood Alliance has been the driving force of change among industries reliant on the resources of Southern forests since 1996. Our work has transformed the forest products sector to modern forestry practices that incorporate the entire value that forests provide, i.e. ecosystem services like clean drinking water, clean air, and carbon sequestration, not just raw material. And as a result we've also increased protection for millions of acres of Southern forests. We've targeted and collaborated with leading companies that have the ability to influence an entire marketplace. We've traveled all the way through the supply chain to the back roads of the South to work with the landowners whose forests fuel the industry. Using Southern forests for bioenergy is a new problem that threatens the progress made to date in protecting Southern forests. Join the fight to protect Southern forests!



www.dogwoodalliance.org

Dogwood Alliance, PO Box 7645, Asheville, NC, 28802

For More Information contact: Adam Macon, Campaign Director adam@dogwoodalliance.org or Scot Quaranda, Communications Director scot@dogwoodalliance.org



COMMUNITY MEETING

The demand for wood pellets as a fuel source in Europe has resulted in the proliferation of manufacturing facilities across the Southeast. The wood pellet industry is expanding rapidly, threatening the quality of life, economic prosperity and environment of residents in the southeastern US.

Join us for an informational session to learn more about what we can do to stop the wood pellet industry in **city council**.



Venue Name

Address

Time

Date



Community Toolkit Checklist

(Once action has been completed, place × for that action)

I. Step One: Raise Awareness and Build Support

- a. Educate Yourself _____
- b. Host an Informational Session
 - i. Venue checklist
 - 1. select location _____
 - 2. ADA compliant _____
 - 3. handicapped parking _____
 - 4. general parking _____
 - 5. reserve space _____
 - 6. time and date _____
 - 7. chairs and tables _____
 - 8. AV availability _____
 - 9. set up team _____
 - 10. clean up team _____
 - 11. secure facility _____
 - ii. Announce meeting
 - 1. Email _____
 - 2. newspaper _____
 - 3. Facebook _____
 - 4. radio _____
 - 5. other _____
 - iii. Develop meeting agenda _____
 - iv. Prepare handouts _____
 - v. Greeters station _____
 - vi. Follow-up _____
 - vii. Build core group
 - 1. 5 – 10 people _____
 - 2. establish regular meetings _____
 - 3. disseminate responsibilities _____
 - 4. timeline for success _____
 - viii. Build media presence
 - 1. local, regional, state newspaper _____
 - a. Op-eds and LTE _____
 - b. length requirement _____
 - c. submission deadline _____
 - 2. radio _____
 - 3. TV _____
 - 4. social _____

II. Step Two: Build The Movement

- a. Build Community Base
 - i. Petitioning at festivals, environmental event, grocery store, door-to-door
 - 1. select location_____
 - 2. get permission_____
 - 3. keep it simple_____
 - 4. petitioning online_____
 - 5. compile data_____
 - 6. follow-up_____
- b. Build Diverse Coalition (use petitioning data to demonstrate broad support)
 - i. Businesses
 - 1. restaurants_____
 - 2. legal_____
 - 3. small businesses_____
 - 4. realtors_____
 - 5. retail businesses_____
 - 6. riverkeepers_____
 - 7. industry_____
 - 8. medical_____
 - 9. research_____
 - 10. pharmaceutical_____
 - ii. Organizations
 - 1. PTA_____
 - 2. NAACP_____
 - 3. civic_____
 - 4. faith_____
 - 5. hunting/fishing_____
 - 6. social justice_____
 - 7. environmental justice_____
 - 8. education_____
 - 9. library_____
- c. Build Your Case_____

III. Step Three: Pass a Resolution

- a. Build Allies_____
- b. Prepare Resolution_____
- c. Introduce Resolution_____
- d. Attend Commissioner Meetings_____
- e. Submit Public Comment_____
- f. Get Issue On Agenda_____